NATION

Camp-bound people clash with forces near Imphal

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BUSINESS

Rupee rebounds by 46 paise, closes at 89.20 against USD

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

India win women's Kabaddi World Cup

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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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Smog city goes hybrid: Delhi enforces 50% WFH

22 held for pro-Maoists posters at protest against pollution

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

The Delhi government has directed all its offices and private organisations to operate with 50 per cent staff on-site, with the remaining employees working remotely, as air pollution levels continue to worsen. The order, issued on Monday, also urges private establishments to implement staggered working hours, strictly enforce work-from-home norms, and reduce vehicular movement linked to office commutes. Essential services, including hospitals, health facilities, fire services, public transport, electricity, water and sanitation, are exempt from these directives.

Delhi's air quality remained close to the 'severe' category on Monday, with the city's overall AQI at 382. Fifteen monitoring stations recorded readings above 400, according to CPCB data cited by PTI.

Meanwhile, a protest against toxic air at India Gate on Sunday evening turned violent after some demonstrators allegedly used chilli spray on police personnel while being removed from the site. A group also reportedly raised slogans in support of Madvi Hidma, the Maoist leader killed in an encounter in Andhra Pradesh on 18 November, leading to scuffle with the cops.

Police said the protesters had occupied the road without permission for nearly an hour, shouting slogans and waving posters. When officers intervened, protesters allegedly broke barricades, used pepper spray, and injured three to four policemen. Several injured personnel were taken to RML Hospital. CCTV footage is being examined to identify others involved.

A Delhi court on Monday sent 17 of the arrested protesters to three days' judicial custody on charges of assaulting and obstructing police personnel and blocking the road.

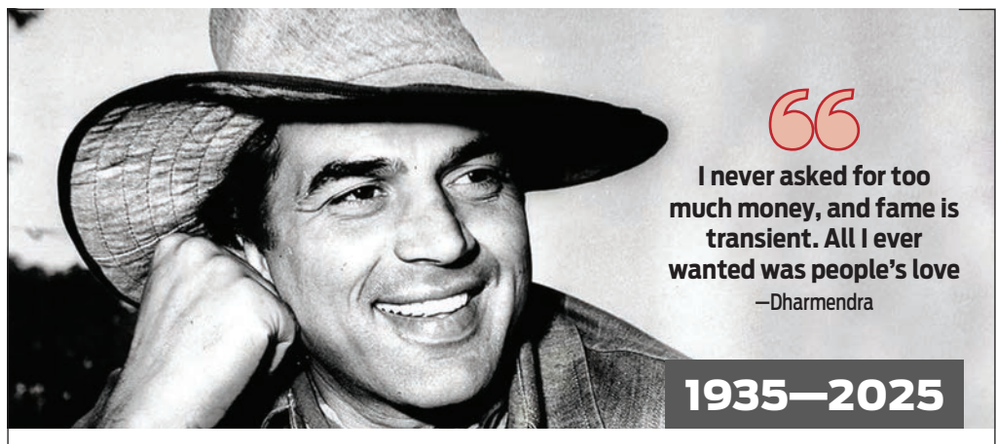
Two FIRs have been registered under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Police reiterated that India Gate is not a designated protest site, and demonstrations are permitted only at Jantar Mantar with prior permission.

The Delhi Coordination Committee for Clean Air criticised authorities for relying on "cosmetic measures" such as water sprinklers and cloud seeding, warning that the capital's persistent pollution poses a serious public-health risk. —*PTI*

A group protested against killing of Madvi Hidma, a Maoist leader, which led to scuffle with the police ***PHOTO: X***

- Police said the protesters had occupied the road without permission for nearly an hour, shouting slogans and waving posters.



"I never asked for too much money, and fame is transient. All I ever wanted was people's love
—Dharmendra

1935—2025

Goodbye, Dharam paaji

MUMBAI, 24 NOV

Dharmendra, one of Indian cinema's most beloved and enduring stars whose remarkable 65-year career spanned more than 300 films, died at his Mumbai home on Monday, just days before his 90th birthday. The actor, celebrated equally for his rugged machismo, gentle charm and effortless comic timing, was cremated quietly at the Pawan Hans crematorium in Vile Parle. His family maintained complete silence, making no public comment on his death.

Known variously as Garam Dharam, the original He-Man of Hindi cinema and even a 'Greek God', Dharmendra embodied a rare combination: dishoom-worthy biceps that broke bones on screen and a smile that broke hearts off it. His career traversed every shade of Hindi cinema, from the intensity of 'Satyakam' to the romance of 'Baharein Phir Bhi Aayengi', the boisterous energy of 'Sholay' and the gentle humour of 'Chupke Chupke'.

Among the last great matinee idols, he refused to fade as the industry moved from black-and-white to colour and eventually digital. He held his ground through the superstardom of Rajesh Khanna and the rise of Amitabh Bachchan. In 2023, at 88, he showcased his ageless appeal in Karan Johar's 'Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani', serenading Shabana Azmi to 'Abhi Na Jaao Chhod Kar' — twinkling eyes, warm smile and a much-discussed screen kiss intact.

Dharmendra had been unwell for some time, in and out of hospital in recent months. On 12 November, a day after premature reports of his death, he was discharged and taken to his Juhu home.

Sharmila Tagore, Dharmendra's co-star remembered him as "just different... a man of the earth who never forgot his roots". Born Dharam Singh Deol on 8 December, 1935, in Punjab's Ludhiana district, he grew up dreaming of Mumbai, inspired by Dilip Kumar and Madhubala. Despite extraordinary fame, he retained the essence of the simple village boy, wholesome, warm and unfailingly human. —*PTI*

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Kant to serve as 53rd CJI for 15 months

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

Justice Surya Kant, who has been part of several landmark verdicts including those on the abrogation of Article 370 and the revision of Bihar's electoral rolls, was sworn in as the 53rd Chief Justice of India on Monday. He succeeds Justice BR Gavai.

President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath at a brief ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan, where Justice Kant took the oath in Hindi in the name of God. Appointed on October 30, he will serve nearly 15 months as CJI and demits office on February 9, 2027.

Vice President C P Radhakrishnan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the ceremony. Soon after taking oath, Justice Kant greeted the Prime Minister, and a customary group photograph was taken with senior dignitaries, including former CJI Gavai and Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal. Former vice president Jagdeep Dhankhar was also present.

Justice Kant, born on February 10, 1962, in Haryana's Hisar district, rose from being a small-town lawyer to the country's highest judicial office. He secured 'first class first' in his Master's in Law from Kurukshetra University.

Following his elevation, Justice Kant now heads the reconstituted Supreme Court collegium. The five-member body comprises Justices Vikram Nath, BV Nagarathna, JK Maheshwari and MM Sundresh. The three-member collegium for high court appointments includes the CJI and Justices Nath and Nagarathna. Only one change is expected during his tenure, when Justice Maheshwari retires in June 2026. —*PTI*

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CJI Surya Kant with ex-CJI BR Gavai during his swearing-in ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

DECISIONS TAKEN ON DAY 1

- Urgent listing requests must be made in writing.
- Oral mentions allowed only in extraordinary situations: death penalty, personal liberty.
- 17 cases heard by CJI Surya Kant on Day 1.

J&K BJP SEEKS SCRAPPING OF 42 MUSLIMS' MEDICAL SEATS

SRINAGAR, 24 NOV

A political storm has erupted in Jammu and Kashmir after Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha accepted a BJP memorandum demanding the scrapping of the admission list at the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence, where 42 of the 50 selected students are Muslims.

Students who had cleared NEET on merit, met all qualifications, and secured admission now find their futures abruptly jeopardised.

BJP, backed by Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal, also urged Sinha on Saturday to amend admission rules and reserve all seats for Hindu students, arguing the institution is linked to a religious shrine. Sinha chairs the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, which runs the institute. However, the university is not a minority institution, and officials said that admissions follow National Medical Commission rules, with 85 per cent of seats for Jammu and Kashmir domiciles and 15% open nationally.

It said that it followed NEET-based merit with no scope for religious preference

Opposition parties condemned the BJP's move. The National Conference called the memorandum "divisive and communal", warning that determining educational intake by religion would undermine merit. PDP termed the demand "shameful", with its president Mehbooba Mufti alleging that discrimination against Muslims was now extending to education. —Agencies

SC adjourns Wangchuk's wife's plea to 8 December

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

The Supreme Court on Monday adjourned to 8 December the hearing on a plea filed by the wife of jailed climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, terming his detention under the National Security Act as "illegal and arbitrary." A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and NV Anjaria deferred the matter after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and Ladakh, sought time to respond to the rejoinder filed by Wangchuk's wife. On 29 October, the court sought the Centre's response and that of the Ladakh administration on Wangchuk's wife's amended plea. She said the violence in Leh on 24 September cannot be attributed to the actions of Wangchuk. —*PTI*

Canadian PM Carney to visit India in 2026

JOHANNESBURG, 24 NOV

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has accepted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's invitation to visit India early next year after bilateral talks on the sidelines of the G20 summit in South Africa. Modi extended the invitation during their meeting in Johannesburg on Sunday, where both leaders agreed to expand cooperation in defence and space, while boosting ties in trade, investment, technology and energy. According to a statement from Carney's office, the two prime ministers also decided to begin talks on an ambitious Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement covering goods, services, investment, agriculture, digital trade, mobility and sustainable development. They further stressed the need for regular senior-level exchanges involving ministers and business leaders. Carney welcomed progress in the evolving security dialogue between the two countries. India-Canada relations had plunged after Justin Trudeau's 2023 allegation linking India to Hardeep Singh Nijjar's killing, a claim New Delhi dismissed. —*PTI*

Afghanistan Commerce and Industry Minister Alhaj Nooruddin Azizi addresses a press conference in New Delhi on Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Afghan grants 5-yr tax break for Indian investors

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

In a bid to attract foreign investment, Afghanistan's Minister of Industry and Commerce, Alhaj Nooruddin Azizi, announced on Monday that the Afghan government is set to offer five years of tax exemptions to companies investing in various sectors, including gold mining. Speaking at an interactive session hosted by the business chamber Assocham, Azizi highlighted the enormous potential in Afghanistan's market, stating, "There is a huge potential available in Afghanistan. You will not find a lot of competitors."

Azizi also noted that Indian firms importing machinery for investment purposes will benefit from a minimal 1 per cent tariff. He urged Indian companies to send professional teams for initial research and exploration, adding, "Gold mining will definitely require the technical and professional team or professional companies... processing in the country is expected to create jobs."

Additionally, the minister called for the Indian side to address "minor" obstacles hindering trade between the two nations, such as issues with visas, air corridors, and banking transactions. "We want to build the relationship between India and Afghanistan," he stated, emphasising the need to enhance bilateral trade and investment.

Azizi is currently on a six-day visit to India to strengthen economic ties. —*PTI*

LCA Tejas crash in Dubai an isolated occurrence: HAL

BENGALURU, 24 NOV

The crash of a Tejas fighter jet in Dubai was an isolated event, the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) said.

The company stated that an Indian Air Force officer was killed when a Tejas aircraft crashed during an aerial display at the Dubai Airshow.

The incident took place on 21 November, when the Tejas jet crashed in front of spectators.

In its statement, HAL said the crash should not be seen as a reflection of the aircraft's overall performance record. The company, which manufactures the Tejas powered by General Electric engines, said it does not expect any impact on its future deliveries.

HAL said that it is fully cooperating with the investigation. After the crash, HAL's shares declined.

The stock fell 8 per cent in the last five days and was trading 3.14 per cent lower at Rs 4,450.70 on Monday. An Indian Air Force Tejas fighter jet crashed in the United Arab Emirates on Friday while taking part in the Dubai Airshow 2025.

The Tejas was flown by Squadron Leader Naman Syal. —*PTI*

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Vande Bharat runs over 2 B'luru students

BENGALURU, 24 NOV

Two first-year nursing students were killed after they were allegedly run over by a Vande Bharat Express train on the outskirts of Bengaluru, police said on Monday.

The deceased students, Sterlin Eliza Shaji, 19, and Justin Joseph, 20, both from Kerala, were studying BSc Nursing at a private institute in the city, they said.

The incident occurred at around 2.35pm on Sunday when the two were crossing the tracks near the Chikkabanavara railway station, on their way to their accommodation nearby. Hit by the Belagavi-bound Vande Bharat train from Bengaluru, both died on the spot. Their bodies were found in a severely dismembered state on the tracks. CCTV footage is being examined to determine whether the deaths were accidental or suicide. —*PTI*

IN PERJURY CASE

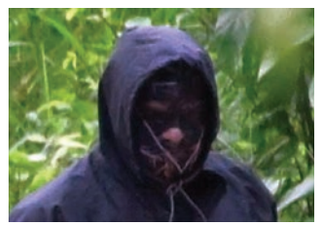
Dharmasthala whistleblower gets bail after 3 months

MANGALURU, 24 NOV

A court in Belthangady on Monday granted bail to CN Chinnaiah, who was arrested on charges of perjury in the Dharmasthala case.

Chinnaiah, the whistleblower who alleged that dozens of bodies of women and minors were secretly buried in the temple town, is one of six people named as accused by the Special Investigation Team (SIT).

His allegations, made earlier this year, claimed that bodies — some bearing signs of sexual assault — were buried between 1995 and 2014. However, the SIT found major inconsistencies in his statements. He was arrested on 23 August for alleged perjury and remanded to judicial custody in Shivamogga. His bail plea was initially rejected in September due to the seriousness of his accusations and the ongoing investigation.



Last week, the SIT submitted a 3,900-page report to the Judicial First Class Magistrate Court in Belthangady under Section 215 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). The report suggests Chinnaiah's claims may have been part of a wider conspiracy and calls for judicial action.

While granting bail, the court imposed strict conditions, including curbs on his movement and communication. The SIT has conducted excavations where human remains were found at two sites. —PTI

B'luru college student strangled to death by friend

BENGALURU, 24 NOV

A 21-year-old college student has been allegedly strangled to death by her male friend at a rented house on the outskirts of the city, police said on Monday. Devisri, the deceased woman, was a native of Andhra Pradesh and was studying final year BBA in a private college, they said The incident occurred on Sunday night at Tammenahalli near Nelamangala, police added. Citing preliminary investigation, a senior police officer said that the accused took the student to his friend's rented accommodation where he allegedly strangled her to death. Soon after the incident, he fled the spot, police said, adding that the motive behind the murder will be established after the arrest of the accused. —*PTI*

3, including minor, killed in head-on collision in Bidar

BIDAR, 24 NOV

Three people, including a five-year-old child, were killed in a head-on collision between two bikes on the Chambol-Benakanahalli road under the jurisdiction of Janwada police station in Bidar district, police said on Monday. The deceased are Mallikarjuna, 35, his daughter Mahalaxmi, 5, and Pawan, 28, the Bidar SP said. "Mallikarjuna was driving with his wife, her mother and child," he added. He said that both persons who were driving the bikes lost their lives. The injured were admitted to BRIMS Hospital in Bidar. Mallikarjuna and Pawan died on the spot, while Mahalaxmi died at the BRIMS Hospital. Mallikarjun's wife and mother-in-law were injured and are in BRIMS Hospital. —*PTI*

CITY TOUR

Comedian Conan O'Brien poses in front of the Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru during his first visit to India. O'Brien is in the City to film an episode for the third season of his travel series 'Conan O'Brien Must Go', and was spotted at several popular Bengaluru landmarks
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Pro-DKS MLAs travel to Delhi, CM vows continuity

Duo unveils projects worth Rs 2K cr in Sidlaghatta

BENGALURU/ CHIKKABALLAPUR, 24 NOV

The leadership tussle between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar intensified on Monday, with more legislators backing Shivakumar travelling to Delhi to lobby the Congress high command. Siddaramaiah, however, reiterated that he would continue as Chief Minister if the party leadership wanted him to, stressing that both he and his deputy were bound by the high command's decision.

Asked repeatedly whether his deputy would replace him, Siddaramaiah said the question itself was redundant when the decision rested with the party.

At least six MLAs from the Shivakumar camp, HC Balakrishna, KM Uday, Nayana Motamma, Iqbal Hussain, Sharath Bachegowda and Shivaganga Basavaraj, reached Delhi on Sunday night, with more expected to follow. Several legislators had already met Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge last week, amid renewed buzz over a 2023 power-sharing agreement as the government completed 2.5 years in office on 20 November.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah along with Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar inaugurates various development works in Chikkaballapur on Monday
PHOTO: SALAR PHOTO

Shivakumar, speaking in Chikkaballapur, called the Chief Minister's words "Veda Vakya" for him, indicating he would abide by whatever the High Command decides. Both leaders had earlier shared a stage to inaugurate development projects worth about Rs 2,000 crore. Shivakumar also hit back at BJP accusations of "horse-trading" within Congress, saying such practices were part of the saffron party's "culture". He recalled earlier claims within the BJP about money allegedly exchanged for leadership positions and to poach MLAs.

Meanwhile, senior minister K J George, considered close to Siddaramaiah, denied speculation that he had been mediating between the two camps. He said his recent late-night meeting with Shivakumar was only to discuss governance matters and the upcoming Bengaluru civic polls. "There is no rebellion. We are all one Congress family," he maintained.

Congress insiders say a Cabinet reshuffle sought by Siddaramaiah would signal that he may complete the full five-year term, potentially diminishing Shivakumar's chances of moving to the top post. —*PTI*

LoP R Ashoka releases paper boat in a pothole outside Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru, on Monday, highlighting the poor condition of civic infrastructure
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

CM has compromised to stay in power: Bommai

MYSURU, 24 NOV

Former chief minister and Haveri MP Basavaraj Bommai on Monday accused Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of compromising his principles to remain in power and predicted he may eventually resign if he continues to bend to the Congress high command.Bommai said Siddaramaiah was once known as a tough, rebellious politician who would not yield easily.

"If he maintains that aggressive attitude, he won't resign. But if he has compromised his principles, he will agree to power-sharing," he said. He alleged that development in the state had taken a back seat as Congress leaders remained embroiled in a power-sharing tussle.

With the Congress performing poorly across several states, the party's national leadership had also grown weak, he claimed.According to Bommai, the Chief Minister's repeated insistence that he would complete a full term suggested that "the old Siddaramaiah" had weakened. He accused the Congress government of rampant corruption, infighting and neglecting development from the day it took office.Bommai said allegations made by the Congress against the previous BJP government over contractor commissions had been proven false, and that Karnataka—once known for progress—was now in the news for "misrule and instability". —*Salar News*

Four killed as SUV falls off Chennai expressway flyover

MALUR, 24 NOV

Four men from Chennai were killed in the early hours of Monday when their SUV rammed a flyover barrier and plunged nearly 20 feet at Abbenahalli in Malur taluk on the newly built Chennai Expressway. The accident occurred around 2.30 am, killing all four on the spot.

The deceased are Gopi, 38; Gowtham Ramesh, 28; Hariharan, 27; and Jayashankar, 30. Police said the group left Chennai around 11 pm. Hariharan, a ministerial staffer with the Central Army, was on a pilgrimage to Kerala's Sabarimala wearing the Ayyappa mala, while his three friends, software engineers working in Bengaluru, were returning after a weekend with their families.

Malur Police Inspector Ramappa Gutter said the driver is suspected to have dozed off while speeding, causing the SUV to hit the barrier before falling off the flyover. With minimal traffic at that hour, no other vehicle was involved.

The Chennai Expressway has witnessed nearly 20 fatalities in nine months. Major crashes include the 2 March incident in which four people died on the spot after a speeding car hit a two-wheeler, with a pregnant woman dying later in hospital. In May, a medico intern died after hitting a divider. Two men from Devanahalli were killed in June, and two more Bengaluru residents died in a head-on collision on 30 July. Another crash near Kalkere saw three deaths and over 20 injuries when a tempo traveller hit a van and a stationary ambulance.

In response to the rising toll, former KGF SP KM Shantharaju installed speed radar guns on the Bangarpet stretch and set a 120 kmph limit for cars, imposing fines for violations. Yet accidents continue unabated, adding to the expressway's reputation as a dangerous, even "cursed", stretch. —*Salar News*

WINTER TINT

It's that beautiful time of the year again when Pink Tabebuia trees bloom as winter sets in
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

BENGALURU ATM CASH HEIST: POLICE ARRESTS TWO

BENGALURU, 24 NOV

Two more suspects in the Rs 7.11 crore robbery case in Bengaluru have been arrested, bringing the total arrests to nine, police said on Monday.

Annappa Naik, a police constable attached to the Govindapura station in the cty, who was arrested for his alleged involvement in the robbery has been suspended, officials said.

Initially, six people were arrested in connection with the case on November 19 in South Bengaluru, and Rs 6.29 crore out of the total amount stolen, was recovered.

Among those arrested were former employees of CMS Info Systems, a cash logistics company. The incident occurred near Ashoka Pillar when the vehicle was transporting cash from a bank branch in JP Nagar. —*PTI*

BJP calls state-wide protest over farmers' issues

BENGALURU, 24 NOV

Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka assembly, R Ashoka, on Monday criticised the Congress government in the state, alleging that an internal power struggle for the Chief Minister's chair has caused the administration to neglect the farmers' issues.

He said the BJP's farmers' wing will hold a protest against the administration's "anti-farmers" stance in all assembly constituencies on 27 and 28 November, and in district centers on 1 and 2 December.

"Water from Karnataka is flowing into Andhra Pradesh, with the administration failing to repair the Tungabhadra reservoir gate, hampering second crops and affecting farmers in the region. The procurement of maize has not yet started. The milk incentive payment is still pending. Keeping all these farmers' problems in mind, protests are being organised by the BJP farmers' wing in all districts," Ashoka said.

"For the past six months, there has been a fight for the Chief Minister's post. No one knows who the CM is. The purchase of MLAs has begun. Amid all this, not a single minister is listening to the farmers' problems," he alleged.

Recalling that during the BJP's tenure, three times more compensation was given to farmers affected by floods,

PHOTO: SALAR

the opposition leader said, the Congress government has not yet provided compensation.

According to Ashoka, the Congress government has not yet provided compensation to farmers affected by floods. During the BJP's previous tenure, three times more aid was offered.

"Protests will be held against the anti-farmer government in all assembly constituencies on 27 and 28 November, and in district centers on 1 and 2 December," he said. —*PTI*

Govt opens Entrepreneurship centre in Kalaburagi

BENGALURU, 24 NOV

The State government has announced a Centre for Entrepreneurship in Kalaburagi under its LEAP (Local Economy Accelerator Program), backed by a Rs 1,000-crore, five-year budget to boost regional entrepreneurship, decentralise innovation, and strengthen emerging tech clusters.

In partnership with the KrishiKalpa Foundation, the Centre will support the innovation ecosystem in the Kalyana Karnataka region, with a focus on agriculture, allied sectors, rural innovation, and new technologies.

The Kalaburagi District Administration has allocated 15,000 sq ft of workspace as a startup hub for founders, agripreneurs, and innovators.

"The Centre will operate on a framework of Mentorship – Market Access – Money Access," said Priyank Kharge, Minister for Electronics, IT, BT and Rural Development.

He said LEAP will bridge the rural–urban divide by bringing technology and opportunity to local communities.

With Karnataka's IT-BT sector crossing Rs 1.5 lakh crore, the Centre aims to enable sustainable livelihoods and create five lakh job opportunities. A formal launch is expected in January 2026. —*PTI*

Cab drivers protest outside Uber office for better pay

BENGALURU, 24 NOV

Several cab drivers on Monday staged a protest outside Uber's driver centre here alleging low earnings due to company's differential treatment between fleet drivers and independent drivers, a charge dismissed by the firm.

The protest which was organised by the drivers under the banner of Bharath Transportation Group alleged that the company was recruiting drivers from outside the state, which affected the income of local drivers here.

Police intervened to bring the situation under control after some of the drivers allegedly attempted to enter the office by breaking the locked door. In a statement, Uber strongly condemned the incident and categorically denied the allegation of differential treatment.

"We strongly condemn the use of violence and intimidation by a few individuals who had gathered outside Uber's centre in Bengaluru. We also categorically deny any allegation of differential treatment between fleet drivers and independent drivers. Our policies are designed to ensure transparency, and equal opportunity for all, regardless of their operational model," it stated.Uber further stated that it operates on a zero-commission model where drivers retain 100 per cent of fares after a nominal subscription fee. —*PTI*

HEIST IN HUBBALLI

Gang posing as ED robs gold worth Rs 3.2 cr

HUBBALLI, 24 NOV

A five-member gang posing as Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials allegedly looted gold ornaments worth around Rs 3.2 crore from a Kerala-based jewellery supplier and fled, police said.

The gang intercepted jeweller Sudeen MR and his assistant on Thursday near Neeligin Road. Declaring they wanted to question him, the gang seized 2.942 kg of gold ornaments and Rs 2 lakh in cash.

Sudeen, who supplies gold ornaments to jewellery stores, had come to Belagavi from Mangaluru on 15 November with ornaments worth Rs 3.2 crore.

After visiting stores in Belagavi, Dharwad and Hubballi, he checked into a hotel opposite the old bus stand in Hubballi.

In his complaint filed with the Hubballi police on 23 November Sudeen said the car in which he and his assistant were returning to their hotel from Dharwad was stopped by the gang, who spoke Hindi.

They then asked him to accompany them for an 'inquiry' and also seized Sudeen's mobile phone, removed the SIM card, assaulted him and took away the bag containing the jewellery.

"Preliminary investigation indicates the involvement of individuals known to the complainant," Police Commissioner N Shashi Kumar said. —*Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

PM to hoist saffron flag in Ayodhya on Tuesday

AYODHYA, 24 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit Ayodhya on Tuesday to ceremonially hoist a saffron flag atop the Ram temple, marking the completion of its construction. Ahead of his visit, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reviewed the preparations, instructing officials to ensure smooth arrangements. The 10x20 feet flag features a radiant Sun symbolising Lord Rama's brilliance, alongside an 'Om' and Kovidara tree imagery. The PMO stated that the sacred flag represents dignity, unity, and the ideals of Ram Rajya. Modi will also visit various temples and address a gathering, coinciding with significant cultural and spiritual dates. Enhanced security measures have been implemented, with thousands of personnel deployed in the city. *—PTI*

Kerala local body polls: UDF to give 5 lakh homes

KOCHI, 24 NOV

The United Democratic Front (UDF) in Kerala has launched its election manifesto for the upcoming local body polls, pledging to construct five lakh houses over the next five years while also aiming to eradicate poverty. Notable commitments include a monthly allowance of Rs 2,000 for ASHA workers and a dedicated programme for elderly welfare. Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan highlighted the revival of the 'Ashraya 2.0' scheme, previously introduced by UDF for poverty alleviation but, which was later shelved. Additional promises encompass unconditional development funds for all wards and initiatives for waste management and control of stray dog, underscoring a commitment to community welfare and environmental balance. *—PTI*

PA of M'rashtra minister held for wife's suicide

MUMBAI, 24 NOV

Anant Garje, personal assistant to Maharashtra Minister Pankaja Munde, was arrested on Monday on charges of abetting his wife Dr Gauri Palve's suicide. According to the details, Palve, 28, allegedly ended her life at their residence in Mumbai's Worli area following a domestic dispute, prompting her father to file a complaint with police. Allegations surfaced that Palve faced harassment from Garje, who purportedly had an affair, as per family claims. They contest the suicide narrative, labelling it a potential murder and have requested a thorough inquiry. An official stated Garje would be presented in the court later on Monday as investigations continue into the circumstances surrounding the tragic death of his wife. *—PTI*

2 CPI(M) members convicted in Kerala crude bomb case

KANNUR, 24 NOV

Two CPI(M) workers, including a local body election candidate, have been convicted in a case involving the hurling of a crude bomb at police. The Thaliparamba additional district and sessions court judge held Nishad VK and Nandakumar TCV guilty on Monday. The court acquitted the third and fourth accused, Midhun A and Kripesh KV. Nishad is contesting the elections from Payyannur municipality. The duo was convicted for attempting to cause an explosion and for making or possessing explosives. However, they were acquitted of assaulting or using criminal force to deter a public servant from duty. The court will announce the sentence on Tuesday, with both guilty individuals remanded to jail. *—PTI*

WB BLOs protest 'excessive' SIR work

They claim EC did not respond to their repeated complaints; submit memorandum to CEO

KOLKATA, 24 NOV

Booth-level officers, engaged in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process in West Bengal, scuffled with police personnel on Monday while trying to enter the Chief Election Officer's office here during a demonstration to protest against alleged excessive work pressure.

Members of the BLO Adhikar Raksha Committee took out the procession from Kolkata's College Square, carrying locks and fetters to symbolically close the main entrance of the building in which the office of the CEO is housed.

A 10-member delegation — comprising four BLOs and six teachers or state government employees — entered the office of CEO Manoj Agarwal in the evening to submit their grievances. The CEO's deputy accepted their memorandum.

However, as the delegation was leaving, one member alleged receiving a threat message for participating in the rally, prompting the group to launch an impromptu sit-in inside the office.

Kolkata Police and security staff physically lifted the protesters and removed them from the premises.

Earlier, the demonstrators climbed atop the police barricade in front of the CEO's office and alleged that the "Election Commission did not respond to their complaints ".

"BLOs have been directed to complete tasks within a short period, though the same work usually takes more than two years," a functionary claimed.

BLOs were falling sick and two of them died by suicide due to stress.

House-to-house enumeration is being conducted on 4 November to 4 December, with draft rolls scheduled for publication on 9 December

The committee warned that if deadlines are not extended or corrective steps not taken, it will launch a continuous protest programme. *—PTI*

Booth level officers engaged in the ongoing SIR exercise in West Bengal, raise slogans against the Election Commission during a protest march over alleged excessive work pressure in Kolkata on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

SIR assistance camp set on fire in Bengal: TMC

KOLKATA, 24 NOV

The Trinamool Congress accused the BJP of setting on fire a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) assistance camp erected by the party at Kalyani in West Bengal's Nadia district. "A SIR assistance camp, hich was set up to provide support and relief to the public, was vandalised and set on fire at a location adjacent to the party office in Ward No. 6, Kalyani Town. This was carried out by BJP supporters," the TMC alleged attaching a video of the camp in a social media post. The property and equipment were destroyed. The police are trying to trace the miscreants. A district BJP leader denied the claim, alleging internal infighting within TMC. *—PTI*

Didi writes to CEC, opposes contractual staff for SIR

KOLKATA, 24 NOV

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday wrote a letter to Chief Election Commissioner (CEO) Gyanesh Kumar, demanding his "immediate intervention" into two issues related to the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise.

She mentioned in the letter about the state CEO's direction to district election officers not to engage contractual data-entry operators and Bangla Sahayata Kendra staff for SIR or other poll-related work. The other matter is on EC setting up polling booths inside private residential complexes.

The CM wondered whether those matters are being undertaken to help "a political party".

The TMC supremo, wondered on the necessity to outsource

contractual worker when district offices already have a substantial number of "competent professionals."

Taking note of the ongoing "reverse migration" of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh amid SIR, West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose visited the BSF's border outpost at Swarupnagar in North 24 Parganas district to take stock of the ground situation there.

He will visit the bordering areas of Murshidabad on Tuesday. *—PTI*

SC notice to Centre over cash donations to political parties

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from the Centre and others on a plea which challenged the validity of a provision of the Income Tax Act that allows political parties to receive "anonymous" cash donations below Rs 2,000.

The plea said this lack of transparency undermines the purity of the election process as it deprives voters of the crucial knowledge about the source of political funding, including the donors and their motives, preventing them from making a rational, intelligent and fully informed decision while casting their vote.

The apex court issued notices to the Centre, Election Commission and several political parties on the petition, which has also sought a direction to the poll panel to prescribe as a condition for registration of a political party and allotment of the election symbol that no amount can be received in cash by it.

The plea sought the striking down of Clause (d) of section 13A of the Income Tax Act, 1961, as unconstitutional, and also referred to the apex court's 2024 judgement which scrapped the electoral bonds scheme.

Under section 13A a political party's income received by way of interest on securities and from other sources are exempted from the total income.

The plea sought the scrutiny of Form 24A contribution reports of all parties, requiring them to deposit such incomes for which address and/or PAN have not been furnished.

It sought a direction to the Central Board of Direct Taxes to scrutinise their income tax returns and audit reports. *—PTI*

Rabri seeks transfer of CBI, ED cases to another court

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

Former Bihar chief minister Rabri Devi on Monday filed a plea seeking transfer of the Central Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement Directorate cases against her to another court, citing a credible concern that an impartial trial would not be possible before the current judge.

Devi is an accused in four matters, including the land-for-jobs and IRCTC scam cases, which are being heard by Special Judge Vishal Gogne.

In her petition before the Principal District and Sessions Judge, she claimed the conduct of the Special Judge during multiple proceedings appeared prosecution-leaning, creating "a bona fide and reasonable apprehension" about receiving fair treatment. The plea added that several courtroom instances reflected bias, undermining confidence in the ongoing process. "The applicant is having a bona fide and reasonable apprehension that fair and impartial justice will not be rendered by the Special Judge," the plea stated, arguing that shifting the matters to another competent court was necessary for justice's sake.

It further contended that continuing the trials before the same judge could prejudice her defence and compromise the integrity of the proceedings.

The court is expected to take up the transfer plea later in the day. *—PTI*

Edappadi K Palaniswami; KA Sengottaiyan *PHOTO: PTI*

EPS to resume rallies from KAS' stronghold

CHENNAI, 24 NOV

AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami will restart his outreach drive from ousted leader KA Sengottaiyan's stronghold in Erode on 30 November.

His state-wide 'Makkalai Kaapoom, Tamilagathai Meetpom' campaign, launched on 7 July from Coimbatore, was halted after the Karur stampede on 27 September during a Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam rally that killed 41 people and injured over 60.

Palaniswami will begin the next phase from Gobichettipalayam, the constituency that repeatedly elected Sengottaiyan, who was expelled for rebelling against the leadership and meeting O Panneerselvam, VK Sasikala and TTV Dhinakaran.

According to a party release, he has already covered 174 assembly constituencies across five phases, with the sixth deferred due to assembly curbs imposed after the tragedy. Palaniswami is expected to reinforce his leadership amid criticism of cadre drift, asserting that Sengottaiyan's exit will not affect AIADMK's electoral prospects. *—PTI*

UDF says Vijayan government & BJP are in 'unholy alliance'

KOCHI, 24 NOV

The Opposition United Democratic Front (UDF) has accused Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan of forming an "unholy alliance" with the BJP to obstruct investigations by central agencies into serious allegations against him and his family.

This allegation came during a press conference where the UDF released a symbolic "chargesheet" detailing various accusations against the Left government, coinciding with their election manifesto for the upcoming Local Self Government Department (LSGD) polls.

The chargesheet claims Vijayan's alliance with the BJP aims to prevent accountability for himself and his family in ongoing cases.

The document alleges he deceived the people and his coalition partners by signing the Centre's PM Shri scheme to further the RSS agenda.

Additionally, it criticises the state's poor infrastructure under Vijayan's administration, highlighting issues such as "collapsed bridges" and numerous potholes.

The UDF acondemned misgovernance that it claims led to 23 reported custodial deaths during Vijayan's tenure.*—PTI*

UDF members present the symbolic 'chargesheet' on Monday *PHOTO: X*

- UDF released a symbolic "chargesheet" against the Left government, coinciding with their election manifesto for the local Self Department Department polls.

Rahul meets Cong leaders over OBC empowerment

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday held a meeting with prominent OBC faces of the party, including Sachin Pilot and Anil Jaihind, and deliberated on key issues related to the empowerment of the community, sources said.

The meeting comes days after the Congress' Bihar poll debacle.

Jaihind, who heads the Congress' Other Backward Classes (OBC) Department, elaborated on his department's programmes and outreach initiatives.

Key issues like the need for removal of the 50 per cent cap on reservations and a proper caste census were discussed. Important issues for empowering OBCs and a future roadmap were also discussed during the meeting. Congress to trying to reach out to the OBC community. *—PTI*

'VOTE FOR FUNDS'

Owe no debt despite allegations: Ajit clarifies

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar *PHOTO: PTI*

SAMBHAJINAGAR, 24 NOV

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar has defended his controversial "vote for funds" remark, stating he owes "no debt to anyone" despite decades of allegations against him.

Speaking at a public rally in Jintur ahead of the 2 December local body polls, Pawar acknowledged the media scrutiny but asserted, "If anything happens, they now immediately remember Ajit Pawar."

During a campaign event for the Malegaon Nagar Panchayat elections, Pawar promised that funds would be allocated for the town if voters elected his party, warning that he would "reject" them if they chose otherwise.

In response to criticism from the Opposition, Pawar remarked, "One who works may make errors... I have faced numerous allegations over the past 35 years."

He also appealed to the Election Commission for impartial action, alleging that some organisations were visiting voters' homes to gather personal information in violation of the Model Code of Conduct.

"Law should be the same for everyone, and everyone should be treated equally," he emphasised, advocating for the equitable application of government schemes to benefit the region *—PTI*

- Pawar promised that funds would be allocated for Malegaon if voters elected his party and he would "reject" them if they didn't.

40 % tickets for young leaders

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced on Monday that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will reserve at least 40 per cent of tickets for candidates below the age of 35 in the upcoming civic polls. These elections, including for Mumbai, are set to conclude before 31 January, 2026. He noted that 216 candidates in the last BMC polls had criminal records, while emphasising that not all are corrupt. He refuted claims of systemic corruption. *—PTI*

'BMC POLL LAST ELECTION FOR MARATHIS'

MUMBAI, 24 NOV

Raj Thackeray, president of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), has issued a stark warning regarding the upcoming Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections, suggesting they could be the last for the Marathi community if vigilance is not maintained.

At the inauguration of the MNS Konkan Mahotsav, Thackeray urged party workers to "not let your guard down, otherwise the loss is imminent" and warned that the consequences would be "uncontrollable".

In a related development, the Shiv Sena (UBT) criticised Congress's decision to contest the BMC polls independently, asserting that this undermines opposition unity and could aid the BJP's agenda to divide Mumbai.

An editorial in the Sena (UBT) mouthpiece Saamana downplayed the concerns of the Congress over potential loss of voter base, asserting that "the Muslim community had lended their support to the Maha Vikas Aghadi in both the Lok Sabha and state assembly polls". *—PTI*

Surya Kant: Rural roots, major rulings

CJI Kant was part of key verdicts including abrogation of Article 370, Bihar's SIR

President Droupadi Murmu administers the oath of office to Justice Surya Kant as the 53rd Chief Justice of India during a ceremony, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

Justice Surya Kant, sworn in as the 53rd Chief Justice of India on Monday, has delivered several landmark rulings shaping national policy.

Raised in a middle-class Hisar family in Haryana, Kant began as a small-town lawyer before rising through the judiciary.

Appointed Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court in October 2018, he later joined the Supreme Court, serving on over 300 benches. As CJI, he aims to cut the five-crore case backlog and expand mediation to strengthen justice delivery. *—PTI*

KEY VERDICTS OF CJI SURYA KANT

Constitutional & governance
- Ruled that courts cannot impose timelines on governors or the president for granting assent to Bills, but said governors cannot hold Bills "in perpetuity".
- Part of the bench examining the abrogation of Article 370.

Sedition & surveillance
- Put the sedition law on hold; directed no new FIRs until government review.
- Ordered a Pegasus spyware probe, appointing a three-member expert panel; held national security is not a "free pass".

Elections & democracy
- Directed the Election Commission to disclose details of 65 lakh voters excluded from Bihar's draft rolls.
- Reinstated a woman sarpanch removed unlawfully; flagged gender bias in local governance.

Gender & legal profession
- Ordered one-third reservation for women in bar associations including the Supreme Court Bar Association.

National security & infrastructure
- Upheld One Rank-One Pension, calling it constitutionally valid.
- Cleared the Char Dham project on strategic grounds while noting environmental safeguards.

Free speech & accountability
- Cautioned podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia for derogatory remarks.
- Pulled up comedians, including Samay Raina, for mocking people with disabilities; sought guidelines on online content.
- Rebuked MP minister Vijay Shah for remarks against Colonel Sofiya Qureshi, stressing ministerial responsibility.

Corruption & governance
- Called corruption a "serious societal threat"; ordered a CBI probe into 28 cases exposing alleged fraud by builders and banks.

Workers' rights
- Directed the Centre to formulate a legal framework to protect domestic workers.

High-profile cases
- Granted bail to ex-Delhi CM Kejriwal in excise case, urging to dispel "caged parrot" perception.

Former CJI BR Gavai set a new precedent by leaving the official Mercedes-Benz car for his successor at Rashtrapati Bhavan. He ensured that the designated CJI car was immediately available for Justice Surya Kant.

NCW launches 24x7 helpline, 14490, for women

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

The National Commission for Women (NCW) on Monday announced the launch of a new 24X7 short-code helpline, 14490, to provide quicker and more accessible support to women facing violence, harassment or any form of distress across the country. As the first point of contact, the helpline will continue to guide callers, coordinate with authorities, and facilitate timely intervention in case of emergencies, the NCW said. The toll-free number is linked to the commission's existing helpline 7827170170 to ensure seamless assistance without any cost or delay. The new short code aims to strengthen its outreach and ensure that women in need can access immediate help in a smooth manner, the NCW added. *—PTI*

'Karthigai Deepam' festival begins at TN temple

TIRUVANNAMALAI, 24 NOV

The grand Karthigai Deepam festival, a significant annual event at the renowned Sri Arunachaleshwar temple here, commenced on Monday with the hoisting of the temple flag atop the flagmast. The event culminating with the lighting of a Maha Deepam atop the Annamalai hills is likely to draw about 40 lakh devotees from various parts of Tamil Nadu and the country to participate in the ten-day festival coinciding with the Tamil month of Karthigai (November-December). The district administration has made appropriate arrangements with enhanced amenities and security measures for devotees. The temple car festival will be held on 30 November, while the float festival will be organised between 4 and 6 December. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Intense winter grips Kashmir, Srinagar at -3.2°C

SRINAGAR, 24 NOV

Kashmir is in the grip of an intense cold wave as the minimum temperature across the Valley dipped several degrees below the freezing point, with Srinagar experiencing the coldest night of this winter at minus 3.2 degrees Celsius. Shopian in south Kashmir was the coldest in the Valley at minus 5.1 degrees Celsius, followed closely by Pulwama where the minimum temperature was minus 5 degrees. The Pahalgam tourist resort in Anantnag recorded a low of minus 4 degrees Celsius, while Gulmarg in north Kashmir recorded minus 1.9 degrees Celsius. The Zojila Pass connecting the Valley with Ladakh recorded minus 16 degrees Celsius. Dry weather will persist in the state. *—PTI*

Heavy rain batters Kerala; yellow alert in TN, Puducherry

T'PURAM, 24 NOV

Various parts of Kerala received widespread rains on Monday. The India Meteorological Department issued a yellow alert in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Ernakulam and Idukki districts. Orange and yellow alerts were also issued for TN and Puducherry on Monday. Heavy rains lashed Puducherry and Karaikal regions. Private schools and all colleges in the two regions will remain closed. Tamil Nadu's Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Thoothukudi, Ramanathapuram, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Mayiladuthurai, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and nearby areas are under alerts and have already recorded downpour in the past 24 hours. Moderate rains with thunderstorms have been forecast in Chennai. *—PTI*

Camp-bound people clash with forces near Imphal

IMPHAL, 24 NOV

Hundreds of internally displaced people (IDPs) living in relief camps clashed with security forces at Pukhao and near the Dolaithabi Dam in Imphal East district on Monday as they attempted to return to their native villages, officials said.

IDPs from Ekou, Dolaithabi and Yengkhuman, who have been housed in camps since the ethnic violence of 2023, began marching towards their homes but were stopped by security personnel. Authorities said tear gas was used after the protesters tried to push through barricades and attempted to advance into zones considered highly sensitive.

The protesters argued that the ongoing Sangai festival indicates a return to normalcy, and the state should therefore allow them to go back.

"We are mostly farmers. Our livelihood has been cut off since we fled," protester S Kumarjit Meitei told reporters. "If the government says normalcy has returned, why are we kept in camps? Why can't security forces deal with militants instead of stopping us?"

Officials said the crowd turned agitated when denied passage, leading to scuffles with the forces.

Tear gas was fired to disperse them and prevent movement towards conflict-prone foothill areas bordering Kuki-dominated Kangpokpi district.

Ekou, Dolaithabi and Yengkhuman lie along the Imphal East foothills and were among the worst-hit localities during the ethnic unrest between Meitei and Kuki-Zo groups in 2023. More than 260 people have been killed, and thousands displaced since the violence erupted in May that year. *—PTI*

Navy rolls out indigenous warfare vessel 'INS Mahe'

MUMBAI, 24 NOV

The Indian Navy has officially commissioned INS Mahe, the inaugural vessel of the Mahe-class anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft, expected to enhance its combat capabilities. The commissioning ceremony took place in Mumbai, with Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi serving as the chief guest.

Built by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), INS Mahe exemplifies India's commitment to the Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) initiative in naval design and construction. Compact yet formidable, the vessel is designed for agility, precision, and endurance, crucial for maintaining dominance in littoral waters.

Equipped with torpedoes and anti-submarine rockets, the new Mahe-class vessel aims to hunt submarines, conduct coastal patrols, and secure vital maritime approaches. The Navy stated, "With over 80 per cent indigenous content, the Mahe-class showcases India's growing mastery in warship design, construction, and integration."

Named after the historic coastal town of Mahe on the Malabar coast, the ship's crest features an 'Urumi,' the flexible sword used in Kalarippayattu, symbolising agility, precision, and lethal grace.

The commissioning of Mahe signals the arrival of a "new generation" of indigenous shallow-water combatants, emphasising India's naval prowess. *—PTI*

Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi, and other officials during the commissioning ceremony of INS Mahe, in Mumbai **PHOTO: PTI**

Goa church slams 'Kamasutra Christmas' event

PANAJI, 24 NOV

The Goa Church on Monday condemned the promotional material for an event titled "Tales of Kamasutra and Christmas Celebrations", calling the advertisement "hurtful" for linking a sacred festival with explicit themes. The four-day event, promoted under the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh Foundation, was cancelled after police received a complaint from NGO ARZ and directed organisers to stop the event. Archbishop Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrao said the ad "irresponsibly associates" Christmas with unrelated content, offending the faith and sentiments of millions. He urged organisers to withdraw the material, stressed that freedom of expression carries responsibility, and appealed to avoid events that hurts values. *—PTI*

Arunachal woman claims harassment at Shanghai Airport

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

An Arunachal Pradesh woman living in the United Kingdom has alleged harassment by Chinese immigration officials, claiming she was detained for nearly 18 hours at Shanghai airport after officers refused to recognise her Indian passport during a transit halt.

The incident has renewed concerns over Beijing's attempts to challenge India's territorial sovereignty.

Prema Wangjom Thongdok, travelling from London to Japan on 21 November, said her short layover turned into an ordeal after officials declared her passport "invalid" because it listed Arunachal Pradesh as her birthplace.

Thongdok's family hails from Rupa in West Kameng district. She alleged officers insisted the state was "part of China" and asked her to accept their position before processing.

Thongdok said her layover turned into ordeal **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

In a post on social media platform X,Thongdok said she was held in the transit area without clear explanations, proper food, or basic facilities.

Her passport was allegedly confiscated. Moreover, she was prevented from boarding her connecting flight despite holding a valid Japanese visa.

Thongdok managed to reach the Indian consulate in Shanghai through a UK-based friend, after which officials helped her board a late-night flight.

Thongdok has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling the episode a "direct insult to India's sovereignty" and seeking a strong response.

The incident surfaced amid China's persistent allegation over Arunachal Pradesh, which India has repeatedly rejected. Authorities in Itanagar said the episode demonstrates that China is likely to be extending its stapled-visa posture to international transit points. *—PTI*

AT DELHI AIRPORT

Near miss as Afghan flight lands on wrong runway

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

A major collision was narrowly avoided at Indira Gandhi International Airport on Sunday when an Ariana Afghan Airlines flight from Kabul mistakenly landed on a runway being used by another departing flight. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has initiated an investigation into the incident.

The A310 aircraft operating flight FG-311 was cleared to land on runway 29L, but the pilot-in-command (PIC) reported losing the Instrument Landing System (ILS) guidance at 4 nautical miles, prompting a right turn and subsequent landing on runway 29R instead.

"Due to poor visibility and the failure of the ILS guidance, the aircraft unintentionally deviated from the intended approach path," the PIC stated, adding that no deviation was communicated by the Delhi tower during the approach. Following the landing, the pilot realised the error, noting, "I noticed that I had landed at runway 29R." The cause of the ILS failure remains unclear. *—PTI*

Kerala concert organisers booked for overcrowding chaos

KASARAGOD, 24 NOV

Police have registered a case against the organisers of a music concert in Kerala's Kasaragod after overcrowding triggered chaos and forced the event to be halted on Sunday night.

The concert, featuring singer Hanan Shaah, was part of an expo near the private bus stand. Sixteen people were hospitalised with breathing issues before police dispersed the crowd.

The FIR names organisers Shahzaman Thottan, Nawalu Rahiman, Haris Aboobeckar, Khalid ED, Jubair and others. Police said permission was granted for 3,000 people, but over 10,000 tickets were allegedly sold. The case invokes BNS sections on endangering life and unlawful assembly. *—PTI*

95 booked for organised cybercrime in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

The Delhi Police have detained 381 people and registered 24 FIRs under 'Operation CyHawk', booking 95 suspects in organised cyber fraud. The 48-hour operation, which ended at 9 am on 21 November, led to the seizure of 1,843 mobile phones, three laptops, 84 ATM cards, fake insurance documents, company stamps and Rs 10.28 lakh in cash.

Police dismantled an illegal mobile manufacturing unit linked to cybercrime, arresting five people, including Ashok Kumar, 45, and Ramnarayan, 36, and seizing a laptop containing IMEI-morphing software and 1,826 phones.

An unlicensed call centre was also shut down, resulting in the arrest of Khemchand, 33, and the recovery of fake policy letters and Rs 10 lakh in cash.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Other arrests included an interstate ATM-fraud group from whom "81 ATM cards, a motorcycle and a scooter were recovered," police said.

In a parallel crackdown, police busted a pan-India stock market fraud and arrested three people who allegedly duped investors of crores through fabricated trading schemes. Investigators traced financial trails leading to the shell companies behind the scam. *—PTI*

AFTER REPEATED REJECTIONS

Andhra doc ends life after US visa denial

AMARAVATI/ HYDERABAD, 24 NOV

A 38-year-old woman doctor from Andhra Pradesh died by suicide at her flat in Hyderabad, allegedly distressed over the rejection of her US visa, police said on Sunday.

The deceased, identified as Rohini from Guntur district, was found dead on 22 November after her family broke open the door when she failed to respond.

The incident came to light when her domestic help alerted the family on finding the door locked from inside. Police said preliminary inquiry suggests she may have consumed an overdose of sleeping pills or administered an injection on Friday night. The exact cause will be confirmed after the postmortem.

A suicide note recovered from the flat indicated she had been battling depression and mentioned her repeated visa rejections **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

A suicide note recovered from the flat indicated she had been battling depression and mentioned her repeated visa rejections. Her mother, Lakshmi, said Rohini had long aspired to move to the US for a medical career and was awaiting a job opportunity there. She stayed in Padma Rao Nagar as the locality had libraries that supported her preparation.

Lakshmi said Rohini completed her MBBS in Kyrgyzstan between 2005 and 2010 and had consistently excelled in academics. She added that Rohini had devoted herself entirely to her profession, and had recently grown despondent over visa denials. Despite her mother's advice to practise in India, she insisted opportunities and income were better abroad.

Lakshmi said her daughter's disappointment had deepened in recent weeks, leaving her mentally exhausted and isolated. Chilkalguda Police have initiated further probe. Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support. *—PTI*

THE STAR EVERYONE CLAIMED AS THEIR OWN

UTTHARA KUMARI B

Is it true that the legend is no more? I couldn't digest the news.

I can't remember when or how I became veteran actor Dharmendra's great admirer. Was it his movie 'Anupama' or 'Chupke Chupke' or 'Guddi' or one of those romantic entertainers? But to anyone who cared to ask me in my childhood who my favourite actor was, I would always say Dharmendra.

And 'Guddi', where he played himself defined his persona on and off screen -- lovable, charming and graceful. Dharmendra was called handsome, "Garam Dharam", He-Man. No one can dispute the fact that he was one of Indian cinema's legendary sparklers.

Of his good looks, he would say, he was "embarrassed" by all this talk and would attribute his handsomeness to "nature, my parents and my genes".

Everyone has their own favourite actor, but all owned Dharmendra too. What was it that endeared him to all? Was it his charm? His good looks? His acting prowess? His warmth and humility off screen? It was all these and more.

Humble, he was. I had the opportunity of interviewing him twice for a national daily, marking two milestones in his career.

When I contacted him for my second interview, he agreed and fixed a date. It was the next day but I got a call while at work and Dharamji was on the line. He said, "Utthara dear, I am sorry but tomorrow won't be possible as I am in Punjab shooting for a film."

He continued, "I know you work in a newspaper office and I know you have odd timings. Tell me, when it is convenient for you, and we will fix up the interview." He was worried about my convenience!

When soft romantic heroes and angry young men ruled the screen, he stole hearts combining virility and simplicity with vulnerability. No wonder 'Guddi' idolised him and 'Basanti' fell under his spell.

Whether he said "Mausi chakki peesing" or screamed "Kutte, kameene, mein tera khoon peejaaonga" or said 'Basanti' in that loving way, he gave cinema some of its magical moments.

Born as Dharmendra Kewal Krishan Deol in Punjab on 8 December in 1935, he was a wide-eyed boy when he watched Dilip Kumar's 'Shaheed'. After seeing Shaheed, he wanted to become an actor, he said in the interview.

"I told my mother I wanted to go to Bombay (now Mumbai) and try my luck there. She

1935—2025

said the elders in the family may not agree. Those days, the acting profession was frowned upon. I was disappointed — but my mother couldn't see me sad and gave me permission to pursue my dream.

"I had won the Filmfare talent contest. Today I can say with satisfaction that God has been kind to me. But it wasn't smooth in the beginning."

After several heartbreaks, he got his break in 'Dil bhi tera hum bhi tere'.

He said in the interview, "I felt like an athlete who was determined to win a gold medal at the Olympics. The film didn't do too well, though the songs were a hit. Looking back, I guess I was nervous and awkward. But which newcomer isn't?"

In his initial years, he even played a baddie in 'Aayi milan ki bela'.

Slowly, he started tasting success. So much so that he earned the epithet of 'bankable star' because his films raked in money. And the hit pair of Dharmendra and Hema Malini gave several successful films such as 'Sharafat', 'Raja Jani', 'Sholay' and 'Jugnu'. Their on-screen chemistry often mirrored their real-life romance.

Once called a handsome hero and romantic star, Dharmendra became an action icon in the 1980s.

Even in his late 70s, Dharmendra commanded a huge fan following. He worked in home productions: Hema Malini's 'Tell me O Khuda' and 'Yamla Pagla Deewana', a successful Deol family franchise. In one of his last movies – 'Rocky aur Rani ki Prem Kahani' -- he delivered a performance that you cannot but fall in love with. His yet-to-be-released last movie was 'Ikkis', a war drama about a relief life hero.

Beneath the rippling muscles and handsome looks was a sensitive actor. He had done different roles in a career spanning over six decades: a simple-hearted villager, a slick sophisticate, an introspective writer, an idealist, an endearing but a drunk Veeru to a clumsy Prof Parimal Tripathi who tries to speak "shuddh" Hindi.

Yet, if the word versatile had never been used for him, it's because no one had seriously evaluated his talent.

He was honoured with the Padma Bhushan in 2012 but many other major awards and recognition eluded him.

"People love me. That is the biggest award for me. I am grateful to the camera for it is the camera which has taken me to the people," he said in the interview.

"I love to be loved," he would always say.

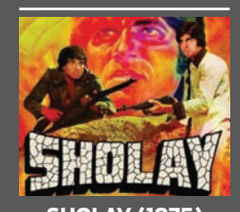
And this golden-hearted hero got abundant love from all.

Coincidentally, the title of his debut film was 'Dil bhi tera, hum bhi tere!'

The writer, a veteran journalist, worked with The New Indian Express and The Times of India in senior positions. After four decades in active journalism, she now does freelance work.

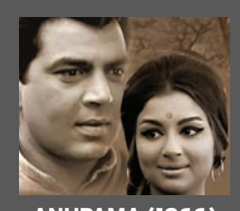
MUST-WATCH FILMS

AMONG THE 300+ MOVIES DHARMENDRA HAS ACTED IN, HERE ARE SOME RECOMMENDED MUST-WATCH FILMS:

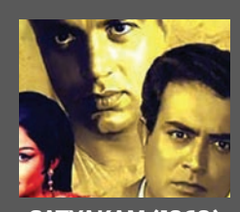


SHOLAY (1975)

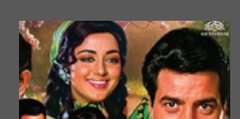
CHUPKE CHUPKE (1975)



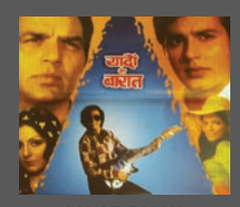
ANUPAMA (1966)



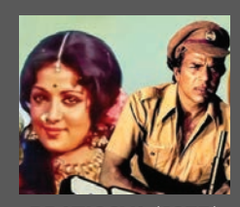
SATYAKAM (1969)



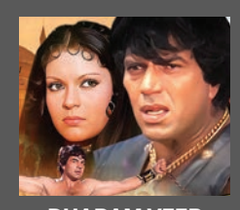
SEETA AUR GEETA (1972)



YAADON KI BAARAAT(1973)



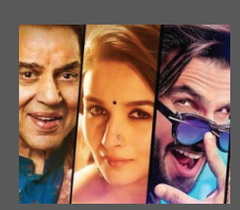
PRATIGGYA (1975)



DHARAM VEER (1977)

APNE (2007)

YAMLA PAGLA DEEWANA (2011)



ROCKY AUR RANI KII PREM KAHAANI (2023)

3 FAMOUS DIALOGUES OF DHARMENDRA

BASANTI, IN KUTTON KE SAMNE MAT NAACHNA

—SHOLAY (1975)

UMA JI! SHAYAD AAPNE KHUD KO KABHI HASTEY HUEY NAHI DEKHA, KABHI CHUPKE SE AAINE KE SAAMNE JAAKAR DEKHIYE AUR DEKHIYE YE HASI KITNI KHOOBSURAT HAI

—ANUPAMA (1966)

KUTTEY KAMINEY, MAI TERA KHOON PEE JAUNGA

—YAANDON KI BARAAT (1973)

Clockwise from left: Dharmendra's first trip to Bombay & first stay at a five star hotel at the cost of Filmfare; Him with iconic actors Raj Kapoor & Dileep Kumar

SONGS FOR ALL MOODS

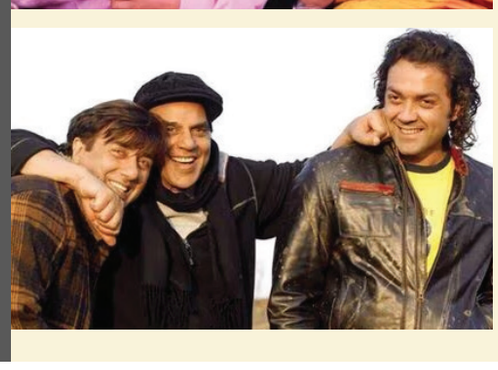
HERE ARE SOME TOP SONGS OF DHARMENDRA. NO MATTER WHAT MOOD YOU'RE IN, THERE WILL BE ONE SONG TO MATCH IT

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
Aaj Mausam Bada Beimaan Hai, Loafer (1973)	Pal Pal Dil Ke Paas, Blackmail (1973)	Main Jat Yamla Pagla, Pratiggya (1975)	Yeh Dosti Hum Nahin, Sholay (1975)	Ab Ke Sajan Saawan Mein, Chupke Chupke (1975)	Jaaneman Jaaneman, Chhoti Si Baat (1975)	Hum Bewafa Hargiz Na Thae, Shalimar (1978)

Amitabh Bachchan & Dharmendra's friendship began during shooting of 'Sholay', the two later became close. 'Sholay' recently celebrated its 50th anniversary

THE ROMANTIC

Dharmendra had two marriages. His first wife, Prakash Kaur, has always stayed away from the limelight. Together, they have four children, Sunny Deol, Bobby Deol, Vijeta, and Ajeeta. Later, Dharmendra married the "Dream Girl" of Bollywood, Hema Malini, and they have two daughters, Esha Deol and Ahana Deol.



A POET AT HEART

Not many know that Dharmendra was a poet in real life, expressing his emotions and inner thoughts through his verses in Hindi and Urdu.

POLITICS WASN'T FOR HIM

Dharmendra made his political debut in 2004. He was the BJP MP from Bikaner in Rajasthan for one term. But he soon found out that politics was not his cup of tea.

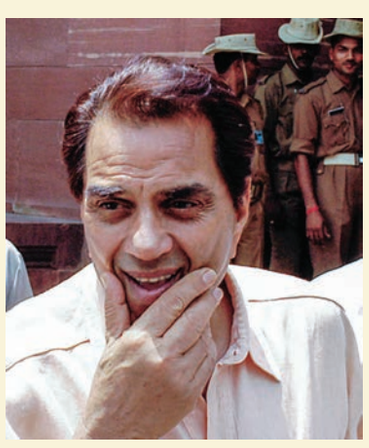


PHOTO: PTI

'Paranoia' led me to break ankle monitor: Bolsonaro

SAO PAULO, 24 NOV

Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro told a custody hearing that medicine-induced "paranoia" caused him to violate his electronic ankle monitor, according to a document seen by Reuters. He was detained on Saturday after Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes ruled he posed a flight risk ahead of a planned supporters' vigil that could hinder police oversight of his house arrest. Bolsonaro denied attempting to escape, claiming he hallucinated a wire inside the device. The 70-year-old, a close ally of Donald Trump, was convicted in September for working with military leaders to overturn his 2022 election defeat—a case Trump called a "witch-hunt," imposing tariffs and sanctions that strained bilateral ties. *—Agencies*

7 held for corruption in the Philippines

MANILA, 24 NOV

Philippine authorities detained seven suspects involved in a corruption scandal linked to flood control projects, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Monday. The initial batch of suspects, including Zaldy Co, a former member of the House of Representatives, and government engineers, was indicted by the Sandiganbayan, an anti-corruption court. The first case involved irregularities in flood control projects in the Oriental Mindoro province, including a river dike costing 289 million pesos (USD 4.8 million), which was executed by Sunwest Corp, a firm owned by Co's family. Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla said three suspects may surrender at the Philippine embassies in the United States, New Zealand and Jordan. *—PTI*

PML-N sweeps bypolls in Pak; wins 12 seats

ISLAMABAD, 24 NOV

The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) swept the by-elections held on Sunday, winning 12 out of 13 seats, according to unofficial results. By-elections were conducted for six seats of the National Assembly (NA) and seven of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab. All NA seats were in Punjab except one in Haripur area of Khyber- Pakhtunkhwa province. The seven Punjab Assembly constituencies up for grabs included PP-73 (Sargodha), PP-87 (Mianwali), PP-98, PP-115, PP-116 (Faisalabad), PP-203 (Sahiwal), and PP-269 (Muzaffargarh). The PML-N had won all seats, except for one in Muzzafargarh, which was secured by Mian Alamdar Abbas Qureshi of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), who secured 55,868 votes, reported Dunya News TV. *—PTI*

Five arrested for vandalism and arson at Nepal's SC

KATHMANDU, 24 NOV

As many as five individuals have been arrested for their roles in the vandalism and arson at Nepal's Supreme Court during the Gen Z protests in September, police announced on Monday. Superintendent of Police Pawan Kumar Bhattarai confirmed the arrests, identifying Raju Pariyar and Jyoti Thapa Ghatani among those detained. Others implicated will be named as police investigations continue. The apex court lodged a complaint after significant damage forced it to suspend proceedings for weeks, with hearings later conducted in tents. During the protests, which resulted in 76 deaths, 66 government buildings were torched. A total of 267 people have been arrested for related crimes. *—PTI*

Canada to overhaul policy on citizenship-by-descent

The change is expected to impact thousands of Indian families

OTTAWA, 24 NOV

Canada has moved a step closer to modernising its citizenship-by-descent rules after Bill C-3, an Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2025), received royal assent. The change is expected to impact thousands of Indian-origin families.

In a statement on Friday, the Canadian government said the legislation marks a major milestone in making the Citizenship Act more inclusive while preserving the value of Canadian citizenship.

Once in force, the amended law will grant citizenship to people born before its commencement who would have been citizens but for the first-generation limit or other outdated provisions.

Introduced in 2009, the first-generation limit bars children born or adopted outside Canada from acquiring citizenship by descent if their Canadian parent was also born or adopted abroad — a restriction that has caused long-standing problems for many Indian-origin Canadians.

PHOTO: PTI

Under the new provisions, a Canadian parent born or adopted abroad will be able to pass on citizenship to a child born or adopted overseas on or after the date the law takes effect, provided the parent has a "substantial connection" to Canada.

"Bill C-3 will fix long-standing issues in our citizenship laws and bring fairness to families with children born or adopted abroad," said Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. "These changes will strengthen and protect Canadian citizenship."

- In a statement on Friday, the Canadian government said the legislation marks a major milestone in making the Citizenship Act more inclusive while preserving the value of Canadian citizenship.

The legislative overhaul follows a December 19, 2023 ruling by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, which found key elements of the first-generation limit unconstitutional. The federal government chose not to appeal, acknowledging the law produced unacceptable outcomes for children of Canadians born abroad.

The law will come into force on a date to be set by order in council. Until then, interim measures remain in place for those affected by the first-generation limit. *—PTI*

US, Ukraine hold talks over Russia peace plan

GENEVA, 24 NOV

Ukraine is working with the United States to find "compromises that strengthen, not weaken us," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday, as US-Ukraine talks in Geneva reported tentative progress toward ending the nearly four-year war. Addressing the Crimea Platform summit via videolink, Zelenskyy warned that Europe's core principle, that borders cannot be changed by force, must be defended and cautioned that Russia seeks legal recognition of territory it has seized.

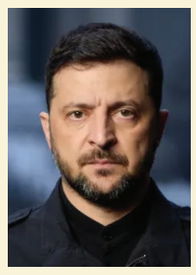
Top US and Ukrainian officials said their initial Geneva session was "very productive," though details remained scarce. US Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** called it the most encouraging day "in a very long time" and said discussions would continue through the week. President Donald Trump has set a Thursday deadline for Kyiv to respond to Washington's 28-point peace blueprint, though Rubio suggested the timeline could shift.

The proposal, drawn up in talks between Washington and Moscow, has sparked alarm in Kyiv and across Europe for aligning with several Russian demands, including territorial concessions and restrictions on Ukraine's military. Some US lawmakers said Rubio privately described the document as a Russian "wish list," a claim the State Department rejected.

Zelenskyy said US proposals may incorporate elements essential to Ukraine's national security. European partners, including the UK, France and Germany, have been working with Kyiv to revise the plan.

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan plans to urge Vladimir Putin on Monday to revive the 2022 Black Sea grain corridor, arguing it could help reopen broader pathways to peace. *—PTI*

ZELENSKYY THANKS DON AFTER 'ZERO GRATITUDE' OUTBURST



US President Donald Trump on Sunday said Ukraine's government had shown insufficient gratitude for US assistance, repeating criticism of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Trump wrote on Truth Social that Ukraine's leadership had shown "ZERO GRATITUDE" for Washington's efforts, including a plan that incorporates several Russian demands. Hours later, Zelensky responded on X, insisting Ukraine was "grateful to the United States... and personally to President Trump" for aid that "has been saving Ukrainian lives."

Israel kills Hezbollah head with $5M bounty

HARET HREIK, 24 NOV

Israel on Sunday carried out its first strike on Beirut in months, saying it killed Hezbollah's chief of staff, **Haytham Tabtabai**, in an attack on the Haret Hreik district. Lebanon's Health Ministry said five people were killed and 25 wounded. Tabtabai, who had a US$5 million bounty on his head, led Hezbollah's elite Radwan Unit and was considered a key figure in rebuilding the group after last year's war.

Israel warned Hezbollah not to rearm, saying Tabtabai had overseen efforts to restore units "to readiness for war with Israel." Hezbollah did not immediately confirm his death, though senior official Mahmoud Qamati said the strike could "open the door to an escalation of assaults all over Lebanon."

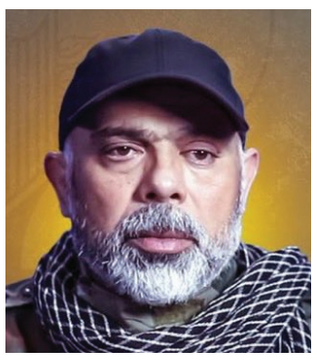


PHOTO: X

The attack came days before Pope Leo XIV's planned visit to Lebanon. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun condemned the strike, accusing Israel of violating the ceasefire and calling for urgent international intervention. Israel said it remained committed to existing "understandings."

- Tabtabai, a veteran commander involved in Syria and Yemen, rose to prominence after senior leaders were killed in 2024. The US designated him a terrorist in 2016.

The hit occurred in a busy civilian neighbourhood, prompting crowds and emergency workers to gather as smoke rose from a fourth-floor apartment. Lebanese forces cordoned off the area. Residents expressed defiance, with one saying the attack "only gives us more determination."

Israel has intensified strikes in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah has been severely weakened since the 2023–24 war, which killed over 4,000 people in Lebanon and 127 in Israel.

Tabtabai, a veteran commander involved in Syria and Yemen, rose to prominence after senior leaders were killed in 2024. The US designated him a terrorist in 2016 for directing Hezbollah's special forces and regional operations. *—PTI*

DOGE quietly disbanded 8 months ahead of schedule

WASHINGTON DC, 24 NOV

The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), the sweeping cost-cutting body created by US President Donald Trump and led by billionaire **Elon Musk**, has been quietly disbanded eight months before its charter expired, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has confirmed.

OPM Director Scott Kupor told Reuters that DOGE "doesn't exist" as a standalone agency anymore, with most of its functions now absorbed into OPM, the federal government's human-resources arm. He said the department is no longer the "centralised entity" it was when Trump appointed Musk to run it in January.

Musk's role as a special adviser drew intense scrutiny, both for his extensive access across government and for the sweeping cuts he enacted. Under his direction, DOGE slashed federal grants, dismissed large numbers of federal workers, closed entire agencies and cancelled contracts, while embedding Musk-aligned staff inside departments to obtain sensitive data in the name of "efficiency."

Musk had pledged to cut the deficit by USD 1 trillion by 30 September, a target that became increasingly unrealistic amid a very public feud with Trump over the president's "One Big Beautiful Bill."

His departure had been anticipated, as his 130-day special-government-employee contract expired on 30 May. DOGE's website claims US$214 billion in savings, but multiple reports say the figures were inflated or overstated. *—Agencies*

Airlines cancel flights to Venezuela after US warning

CARACAS, 24 NOV

International airlines cancelled flights to Venezuela on Sunday after the US Federal Aviation Administration warned pilots to be cautious when flying in the country's airspace due to heightened military activity.

Marisela de Loaiza, the president of the Airlines Association in Venezuela, said that six carriers have indefinitely suspended flights. They are TAP, LATAM, Avianca, Iberia, Gol and Caribbean. Turkish Airlines suspended flights from 24 to 28 November.

The warning came as the Trump administration has ramped up pressure on Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. The US has conducted bomber flights up to the coast of Venezuela, sometimes as part of a training exercise to simulate an attack, and sent the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R Ford into the region. *—PTI*

A rescue worker collects remains at the bombing site at the gate of headquarters of the Federal Constabulary in Peshawar, on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

3 killed in suicide attack at Pak's paramilitary HQ

PESHAWAR, 24 NOV

At least three security personnel were killed and two others injured in a suicide attack at a paramilitary force headquarters on Monday in Pakistan's Peshawar.

Three suicide bombers, who attempted to storm the Federal Constabulary (FC) headquarters, were also killed in counterfiring. One attacker detonated himself at the main gate, while the other two entered the premises.

"Two suicide explosions took place inside the FC headquarters, one at the main gate and the other near the motorcycle stand located within the premises," Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zulfiqar Hameed said.

The powerful blast at the main gate triggered panic in the surrounding residential and commercial areas.

Additional contingents and rescue teams rushed to the site, and security across the area was placed on high alert.

According to hospital officials, five people, including three civilians, were injured in the attack.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi strongly condemned the terrorist attack. *—PTI*

PAK GENERALS WERE ON NUKE SCIENTIST'S PAYROLL: EX-CIA SPY

WASHINGTON, 24 NOV

Former CIA officer James Lawler, who is credited with helping dismantle AQ Khan's global nuclear smuggling network, said that Khan had financial connections with "Pakistani generals and leaders."

Lawler, who headed the CIA's Counter-Proliferation Division, said that the CIA had monitored Khan's role in Pakistan's nuclear programme for years before realising the extent of his trafficking. "We knew he was supplying Pakistan, but we did not imagine he was going to become a proliferator," he said.

AQ Khan was a Pakistani nuclear scientist who built the country's nuclear weapons programme and later ran a global proliferation network.

Calling Khan a "Merchant of Death," Lawler asserted that the scientist's network supplied many foreign N-programmes. Lawler said the CIA infiltrated global proliferation circuits by posing as suppliers of nuclear components. He also highlighted post-9/11 fears about nuclear material reaching terrorists. *—Agencies*

CHILD SAFETY CONCERN

Malaysia to ban social media for under-16s

MALAYSIA, 24 NOV

Malaysia plans to ban social media for users under the age of 16 starting from 2026 over concerns about child safety.

Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil said on Sunday the government was reviewing mechanisms used to impose age restrictions for social media use in other nations, to protect youths from cyberbullying, financial scams and child sexual abuse.

The effects of social media on children's health and safety have become a growing global concern, with companies including TikTok, Snapchat, Google and Meta platforms – Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp – facing lawsuits in the United States for their role in driving a mental health crisis.

In Australia, social media platforms will deactivate accounts registered in the name of users younger than 16 from December. France, Spain, Italy, Denmark and Greece are also jointly testing a template for an age verification app.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Indonesia said in January it planned to set a minimum age for social media users. However, it issued a less stringent regulation requiring tech platforms to filter negative content and impose stronger age verification measures.

- In Australia, social media will deactivate accounts registered by users younger than 16 from December. France, Spain and Italy are jointly testing a template for an age verification app.

Malaysia has put social media companies under greater inspection in response to what it claims to be a rise in harmful content, including online gambling and posts related to race, religion and royalty. Platforms and messaging services with over eight million users in Malaysia are now required to obtain a license under a new regulation that came into effect in January. *—Agencies*

Death toll climbs in Asia amid floods, landslides

HANOI/SYDNEY, 24 NOV

The death toll from widespread flooding and landslides across Southeast Asia continued to rise on Monday, with Vietnam and Thailand reporting further casualties and tens of thousands displaced. Vietnam has confirmed 91 deaths, with 11 people still missing, after days of heavy rain triggered landslides and severe flooding from Quang Tri to Lam Dong provinces. Dak Lak was the worst affected, recording 63 fatalities, with others reported in Khanh Hoa, Lam Dong, Gia Lai, Danang, Hue and Quang Tri. Damages nationwide are estimated at USD 500 million. The International Organization for Migration said South Korea would contribute USD 1 million to support Vietnam's recovery.

In Thailand, torrential rain across the south caused flash floods affecting nearly 2 million people. Five deaths and four injuries were reported across six provinces. Malaysia is also battling widespread flooding, with more than 12,500 people evacuated across nine states, most of them in Kelantan.

STORM LEADS TO BLACKOUT IN AUSTRALIA

Thousands of residents in Australia's Northern Territory were left without power on Sunday after Cyclone Fina brought destructive winds to Darwin. The category three storm produced gusts of up to 205 kph. Around 19,000 people lost electricity, though no injuries were reported. *—Agencies*

Gold tumbles by Rs 700 to Rs 1.25L per 10g

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

Gold prices declined by Rs 700 to Rs 1,25,400 per 10g in the national capital on Monday amid appreciation in the rupee, and weak global trends, according to marketmen. Extending losses for the third straight session, the precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity dropped by Rs 700 to Rs 1,24,800 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). Silver too faced selling pressure for the third consecutive day, plunging by Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,55,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). On Monday, the rupee rebounded sharply by 50 paise to settle at 89.16 against the greenback, due to US dollar selling by banks and importers amid a decrease in the prices of crude oil in the global market.—*PTI*

Toyota unveils experiential museum in B'luru

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has announced the first Toyota Experiential Museum (tem) at Phoenix Mall of Asia, Bengaluru. The 8,200 sq ft facility is designed as a lifestyle and cultural hub, blending Indian minfulness philosophy with Japanese culture and technology. The museum begins with mirrored projections depicting the shared seasonal rhythms of Japan and India. It then shifts to a cultural showcase featuring an immersive audio-visual performance and a striking installation of water curtain surrounding a satin-draped car. The visit concludes at the café and merchandise zone. Toyota Kirloskar Motor's deputy managing director, Tadashi Asazuma, states, "tem" is designed to foster emotional connection, highlighting Toyota's commitment to art, innovation, craftsmanship and collaboration —*PTI*

India's seafood sector expands beyond US: Report

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

India's seafood sector is expanding its global exports beyond the United States to counter the impact of rising tariffs. A report by CareEdge Ratings states, shrimp exports grew significantly in 5MFY26, with the total export value rising 18 per cent year-on-year. Non-US markets, particularly China, Belgium, and Russia, accounted for 86 per cent of the incremental export value. In 5MFY26, exports to non-US destinations rose from USD 1.06 to 1.38 billion, highlighting India's strategic expansion into newer and less accessible global markets. While export momentum may soften in FY26 due to pressure from the US market, efforts to open access to new markets and approvals for exporting to EU and Russia will support the industry.—*ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

Air India expects to induct 26 new planes in 2026: CEO

GURUGRAM, 24 NOV

Air India Group expects to induct 26 wide-body and narrow-body planes, and operate 81 per cent of its international flights with upgraded aircraft by the end of 2026, while overall capacity will remain almost unchanged next year. "2026 will be a year of very visible change for Air India, notwithstanding the headwinds that we have faced in the last few months, whether it be AI 171 (crash) or other events, we're continuing our capital expenditure commitments...," Air India CEO and MD Campbell Wilson said on Monday. Air India, which has one flight departure every 70 seconds on average, is set to induct its first Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner from its original order of 570 planes before Christmas and will be operational in January. —*PTI*

Rupee rebounds by 46 paise, closes at 89.20 against USD

Rupee plunged 98P to close at its lifetime low on Friday

MUMBAI, 24 NOV

The rupee rebounded sharply by 46 paise to settle at 89.20 (provisional) against the greenback on Monday, due to US dollar selling by banks and importers amid a dip in global crude oil prices.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened strong at 89.46 and moved in the range of 89.05 and 89.50 during the day. It eventually settled at 89.20 (provisional), up 46 paise from its previous close.

The rupee had plunged 98 paise to close at its lifetime low of 89.66 against the US dollar on Friday, due to a huge demand for the greenback in the domestic forex market amid widespread selling pressure in local and global equities and trade-related uncertainties.

In the steepest fall in over three years, the domestic currency nosedived 98 paise to finally settle at 89.66 against the American currency. The previous biggest one-day fall was recorded at 99 paise against the dollar on 24 February, 2022.

"The RBI opened the dollar lower at 89.15 by selling in NDF (non-deliverable forward) markets... and kept it in a range of 89-89.30 for the day as the market was wary of RBI selling," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was marginally down by 0.02 per cent at 100.15.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.78 per cent lower at USD 62.07 per barrel in futures trade.

Foreign institutional investors sold equities worth Rs 1,766.05 crore on a net basis on Friday, according to exchange data.

India's forex reserves jumped USD 5.543 billion to USD 692.576 billion during the week ended November 14 due to a steep increase in the value of gold reserves, RBI said. —*PTI*

BUILDING TRUST

India, Canada to resume trade talks, says Piyush Goyal

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

India and Canada have recommitted to negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), with an ambitious target to elevate two-way trade to USD 50 billion by 2030, announced Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

Speaking at the Indo-Canadian Business Chamber's Annual National Convention, he described the FTA, or Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), as a testament to the trust between both nations.

Goyal remarked, "We have agreed to begin negotiations on a high-ambition CEPA and double the trade between the two nations by 2030... The strengths of Canada and India can become a force multiplier for businesses and investors."

He highlighted areas of potential collaboration, particularly in critical minerals, nuclear energy, and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and quantum computing.

Relations between India and Canada deteriorated in 2023 following allegations from then Prime Minister Justin Trudeau regarding India's involvement in the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, which India vigorously denied.

Nevertheless, discussions have resumed following recent high-level talks, including one between Prime Ministers Modi and Mark Carney during the G7 summit.

Goyal also stressed the need for actionable outcomes from these negotiations, advocating for the reactivation of the India-Canada CEO Forum to bolster business-to-business contacts. He noted, "Both countries complement each other... The strengths of Canada and the strengths of India together can become a force multiplier for businesses."

Bilateral trade India and Canada in goods and services reached USD 18.38 billion in 2023, with a 10 per cent increase in trade in 2024. —*Agencies*

Sensex drops 331 pts, Nifty ends below 26,000 mark

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

Benchmark Sensex declined by 331 points and Nifty closed below the 26,000 mark on Monday amid last-minute selling by cautious investors and foreign fund outflows.

Paring early gains, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined by 331.21 points or 0.39 per cent to settle below 85,000 at 84,900.71. During the day, it dropped 521.81 points or 0.61 per cent to 84,710.11.

The 50-share NSE Nifty fell by 108.65 points or 0.42 per cent to 25,959.50. The index opened on a positive note and moved in a narrow range for most of the session, but a sharp decline in the final half hour dragged it lower.

Among Sensex firms, Bharat Electronics, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finserv and Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles were the major laggards.

However, Tech Mahindra, Asian Paints, Infosys, Adani Ports, Sun Pharma and HDFC Bank were the gainers.

In Asian markets, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index settled in positive territory while South Korea's Kospi ended lower. Equity markets in Japan were closed for a holiday.

Markets in Europe were trading in the green. US markets ended higher on Friday.

Broader market sentiment was weak as the BSE smallcap gauge dropped 0.83 per cent and midcap index declined 0.27 per cent.A total of 3,033 stocks declined while 1,209 advanced and 207 remained unchanged on the BSE. —*PTI*

AFTER JET CRASH

Hindustan Aeronautics shares drop over 3%

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

Shares of the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) ended over 3 per cent lower on Monday, following the crash of a Tejas aircraft, manufactured by the aerospace behemoth, during an aerial display at the Dubai Air Show last week.

The stock tanked 8.48 per cent to Rs 4,205.25 during the day on the BSE. Later, shares of the firm recovered some of the early lost ground and ended at Rs 4,443, down 3.31 per cent from the previous close.

At the NSE, the stock dropped 4.13 per cent to hit the day's low of Rs 4,405. It finally ended at Rs 4,445.10, down 3.26 per cent.

HAL on Friday said it was deeply saddened by the loss of life of the "courageous IAF pilot" during the aerial display at the Dubai Air Show.

Wing Commander Namansh Syal, who hailed from Himachal Pradesh, was killed on Friday after the indigenous multi-role Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), Tejas, crashed in a ball of fire during the aerial display at the Dubai Air Show.

It was the second time in 20 months that the aircraft manufactured by HAL was involved in a crash. The earlier accident occurred in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, in March last year, but the pilot ejected safely.

"HAL is deeply saddened by the loss of the courageous IAF pilot at the Dubai Air Show. HAL expresses its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. @IAF_MCC @SpokespersonMoD @DefProdnIndia," HAL posted on X. —*PTI*

ANDHRA LAUNCHES RS 66,000 CRORE URBAN PROJECTS

AMARAVATI, 24 NOV

The Andhra Pradesh government on Monday announced a Rs 66,523-crore urban infrastructure acceleration programme under public private partnership model.

The Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) Department has projected this quantum of investment by 2029 across 12 priority sectors.

"The Government of Andhra Pradesh launches Rs 66,523 crores urban Infra acceleration mission through PPP," said an official press release.

The priority sectors include smart water systems, modern transit corridors, integrated mobility, sustainable housing, and next-generation urban utilities, excluding greenfield capital Amaravati's development.

These interventions are expected to contribute Rs 2.8 lakh crore to the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

To catalyse PPP-led urban transformation plan, the state government has allocated Rs 2,000 crore as Viability Gap Funding (VGF) in the current year's budget.

The projects are estimated to generate 2.3 lakh direct and indirect jobs, with a focus on 45 per cent skilled youth employment and 35 per cent women's participation in emerging urban services and technologies.

Among the key components of this plan, the state aims to develop five smart cities with Internet of Things (IoT)-based systems, upgrade 2,500 km of roads, establish 15 urban transit systems and adopt green building norms statewide.

The government is targeting Rs 35,000 crore in Foreign Direct Investment for eight economic zones supported by structured PPP frameworks, technology-driven governance and innovative financing strategies, said the release. —*PTI*

S&P projects 6.5% GDP growth for India in FY26

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

S&P Global Ratings has forecasted India's economy to grow by 6.5 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 2026, with a subsequent growth projection of 6.7 per cent for FY27. The rating agency attributed this optimistic outlook to tax cuts and lower interest rates, which are expected to bolster consumption-driven growth.

India's GDP is estimated to have surged by 7.8 per cent in the April to June quarter, marking the fastest growth in five quarters. S&P noted, "Domestic growth remains robust, driven by strong consumption, despite the impact of US tariffs."

The Reserve Bank of India expects GDP growth in the current fiscal year to reach 6.8 per cent, surpassing last year's 6.5 per cent expansion. The renewed focus on middle-class relief through increased income tax rebates and reduced GST rates on various goods are expected to stimulate consumer spending.

However, S&P cautioned that elevated US tariffs on Indian exports are hindering the growth of the export-oriented manufacturing sector. Nevertheless, there are indications that the US may consider lowering these tariffs. —*PTI*

ISRO to launch US communication satellite

HYDERABAD, 24 NOV

ISRO would launch a US communication satellite using LVM3 on a commercial basis next month, the space agency's Chairman V Narayanan said on Monday.

Delivering the keynote address on the occasion of 68th Annual Day celebrations of Indian Railways Institute of Signal Engineering and Telecommunications (IRISET) here, he also said the country's space programme would be on par with any other advanced nation in terms of launches, satellites and others by 2040.

"Launch date is not yet decided. It will be next month. It is a communication satellite, we are planning to launch. A commercial basis communication satellite we are going to launch in our LVM3 (Launch Vehicle Mark - III), vehicle," he told reporters.

It is not a collaboration with the US, but an American satellite which would be launched on a commercial basis, he said.

According to him, the ISRO, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the helm of affairs, is working on a lot of programmes.

Right now, 57 satellites are in orbit, and the number would increase by three times in three years for serving the country.

"If I summarise the Indian space programme, a programme which started with cycle era, by 2040, we will be on par with any other space bearing nation. —*PTI*

KWALITY FORMS BOARD AHEAD OF HUL DEMERGER

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

Kwality Wall's (India) has announced a series of board appointments in anticipation of its upcoming demerger from Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL). The company has appointed seven new members, comprising one non-executive director, two executive directors, and four independent directors.

In a statement, the leading ice cream and frozen desserts producer highlighted that the newly constituted board features seasoned leaders with substantial expertise in consumer goods, finance, governance, regulatory affairs, risk management, and strategic mergers and acquisitions. These individuals will play a crucial role in guiding the company as it transitions into an independent listed entity.

Chitrank Goel has been appointed Deputy Managing Director and Executive Director, while Ritesh Tiwari will serve as a non-executive director. Additionally, Prashant Premrajka will take on the role of Chief Financial Officer and join the board as Executive Director. Independent directors Ravi Pisharody and Madhavan Hariharan will also be part of the new board. Kwality Wall's (India) is set to officially separate from HUL on 1 December, 2025 —*PTI*

MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

ED freezes Rs 523 cr of WinZo, Gameskart

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

The ED on Monday said it has frozen collective deposits worth about Rs 523 crore of online gaming companies WinZO and Gameskraft as the platforms allegedly "held" funds worth crores of rupees that should ideally have been refunded to players after India banned real-money gaming recently.

The federal probe agency conducted multiple searches between November 18 and 22 in Delhi, Bengaluru and Gurugram as part of a money laundering investigation against their parent companies -- Nirdesa Networks Pvt Ltd (NNPL), Gameskraft Technologies Pvt Ltd (GTPL) and WinZO Games Pvt. Ltd -- and their promoters.

These platforms offered online real-money gaming services to players.

The ED accused WinZO of "engaging in criminal activities and unscrupulous practices as customers were made to play with algorithms without being made aware of the fact that they are playing with the software and not with humans in real-money games".

WinZO, the agency said in a statement, was operating real-money games (RMGs) in countries such as Brazil, the US and Germany etc., from India (on the same platform used by the Indian entity).

The alleged proceeds of crime worth about Rs 505 crore "possessed" by WinZO Games were frozen under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). These deposits are kept in bank accounts in the form of bonds, fixed deposits and mutual funds, the ED said.

The ED said that, that even after the government ban (through the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025), an amount of over Rs 30 crore was "still held" by the Gameskraft, that offered online money gaming services under the name Pocket52.com in its escrow accounts. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

AIFF adopts constitution as per Supreme Court order

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Monday formally adopted Article 25.3 (c) and (d) of the Constitution as directed by the Supreme Court (SC) of India, pursuant to its order dated October 15, 2025.According to Article 25.3 (c) and (d), an office bearer in the executive committee of the AIFF cannot hold a position as an office bearer in a member/ state association."In our judgment, we permitted the present executive to continue till the end of its term to ensure that there is minimal disruption to the already delayed sporting events," the SC said in its October 15 order after the AIFF sought clarification on the two contentious articles Article 23.3, and Article 25.3 (c) and 25.3 (d)."In the same line, and to subserve the same purpose, we direct AIFF to adopt Articles 25.3 (c) and (d) within three weeks from today. —*PTI*

PCB wants to reschedule ODI series against Aus

KARACHI, 24 NOV

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is trying to reschedule a three-match ODI series against Australia at home in March to avoid a clash with the Pakistan Super League (PSL). A source said that the PCB was in talks with Cricket Australia (CA) to reschedule the ODI series. The series is part of a twin tour by Australia to Pakistan for a three-match T20 series from 30 January to 5 February to prepare for the T20 World Cup, and they are then scheduled to return for the ODIs from 13 to 19 March. The source said the PCB wants to reschedule the ODIs because it is most likely to organise the PSL between March and May next year.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Ronaldo scores from a bicycle kick for Al-Nassr in SL

RIYADH, 24 NOV

Cristiano Ronaldo, 40, gave football players half his age an inferiority complex as he scored a mind-blowing bicycle kick goal, proving exactly why he remains one of the best players in the game. Ronaldo, in a match between Al-Nassr and Al Khaleej on Sunday, gave another demonstration of his enduring quality by scoring from a bicycle kick for his club in the Saudi Pro League., No longer in the spotlight of European leagues, the Portugal superstar met a cross from the right wing with an acrobatic volley that was too fierce for the goalkeeper to keep out. —*PTI*

Hat trick for Tariq as Pak seals spot in T20 tri-series final

RAWALPINDI, 24 NOV

Mystery spinner Usman Tariq's hat trick propelled Pakistan into the T20 tri-series final with a 69-run victory against Zimbabwe. Tariq grabbed 4-18 in a mesmerising spell of spin bowling as Zimbabwe was dismissed for 126 in 19 overs to hand Pakistan its third successive win in the tournament, which also involves Sri Lanka. Zimbabwe's Ryan Burl hit 67 not out off 49 balls and shared a 44-run last-wicket stand before Richard Ngarava was run out. Pakistan earlier rode on half-centuries from Babar Azam (74) and Farhan (63) to post 195-5 in its 20 overs after captain Salman Ali Agha won the toss and elected to bat.—*PTI*

India clinch second consecutive Women's Kabaddi World Cup with 35-28 win over Chinese Taipei *PHOTO: PTI*

India win women's Kabaddi World Cup

They earlier won WC in 2012 by defeating Iran

DHAKA, 24 NOV

India successfully defended their Women's Kabaddi World Cup title with a 35–28 win over Chinese Taipei in the final held at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium in Dhaka on Monday, 24 November 2025.

The reigning champions built on an early lead and maintained control in a fiercely contested encounter. India first won the Women's Kabaddi World Cup in 2012 by defeating Iran and has now retained their crown, extending their perfect win record in the competition. They won all six matches in this edition, replicating their six wins from the 2012 campaign. The two sides were meeting for the third consecutive time in a major international final. At the 2023 Asian Games, India secured a dramatic 26–25 win over Chinese Taipei in the gold medal match, following a 34–34 draw between the teams during the group stage of that tournament. Ahead of kick-off in Dhaka, the coin was supplied by Md Mahbub-ul-Alam, Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Chinese Taipei won the toss and sent India in to bat first. Sanju Devi opened the scoring for India with a successful raid, while Chuang Ya-han responded with a bonus point. Both Puja and Sonali secured points from their raids before Sanju regained the lead with a three-point effort. A total of 11 countries participated in this edition of the Women's Kabaddi World Cup, reflecting the sport's rapid international growth. For India, the triumph further cements their status as the benchmark in women's kabaddi, with another title reinforcing a decade-long streak of excellence. —*PTI*

Pant slammed as SA takes 314-run lead

Indian batting flops on flat deck

GUWAHATI, 24 NOV

Sai Sudharsan was careless, Dhruv Jurel was indiscreet, and skipper Rishabh Pant was plain irresponsible as a progressively ugly Indian batting collapse left them on the brink of an embarrassing home series whitewash against South Africa here on Monday. Rishabh Pant-led India suffered a mid-innings collapse, losing six wickets in the space of 27 runs at one stage.

On a pitch that Kuldeep Yadav had compared to a "road", the Indian batters were bounced out for a lowly 201 in their first innings by a 6 feet 8 inches tall pacer, Marco Jansen, who returned a haul of 6 for 48 after smashing 93 on the second day.

At stumps on the third day of the second and final Test here, South Africa were 26 for no loss and had consolidated their overall lead to 314, aiming to give India a target in excess of 450 and with 120 overs in hand for their bowlers. Jansen will cherish his performance on Monday as it came in conditions where there was nothing much for any type of bowler.

While head coach Gautam Gambhir copped a lot of flak for the choice of a rank turner pitch in Kolkata, no one should mind a dressing down from the fiery former batter after the poor game awareness displayed by home batters during the first session and a half of the third day. Yashasvi Jaiswal (58) and KL Rahul (22) had given the team a steady start, but both were a tad unlucky to get the only two deliveries from spinners that bounced from length to see their back.

Marco Jansen and Rishabh Pant *PHOTO: PTI*

Application required in Test cricket was missing: Kumble

The legendary Anil Kumble on Monday slammed the Indian batters' approach after the team conceded a 288-run lead to South Africa in the second Test here, even as pace great Dale Steyn lauded the visitors after three successive days of dominance. On a pitch that Kuldeep Yadav had compared to a "road", India were bounced out for a lowly 201 in their first innings by 6 feet 8 inches tall pacer Marco Jansen, who returned a haul of 6 for 48 after smashing 93 on the second day. "I felt India's batting effort was quite poor. The application and patience required in Test cricket were missing. South Africa 489 and 26 for 0 (Rickelton 13*, Markram 12*) lead India 201 (Jaiswal 58, Washington 48, Jansen 6-48, Harmer 3-64) by 314 runs. —*PTI*

Pranjali wins 25m pistol gold in Deaflympics

Tokyo, 24 NOV

Indian shooter Pranjali Prashant Dhumal dominated from start to end to win gold in the women's 25m pistol event, her third medal in the Deaflympics here on Monday. She had earlier won gold in the mixed pistol event with Abhinav Deshwal and a silver in the women's air pistol. Mosina Halyna of Ukraine won the silver, and Jeon Jiwon of Korea took the bronze. Anuya Prasad, who had won gold in the women's air pistol event, finished in fourth place. Pranjali had qualified for the finals with a new qualification world record and Deaflympic record score of 573 out of 600. Pranjali finished with a score of 34 in the final, two more than Mosina, who won the silver. Jeon won the bronze medal with a score of 30, after having overcome India's Anuya Prasad in a shootout. —*PTI*

CHESS WORLD CUP

Wei-Sindarov contest ends in a draw, Esipenko beats Yakkuboev

NAGPUR, 24 NOV

It was perhaps only fitting that Abhinav Bindra made the ceremonial opening move at the Chess World Cup on Monday. It was the first game of the final of one of the biggest events in the chess calendar, and India's first-ever individual gold medallist at the Olympics made the first move for Javokhir Sindarov, taking the 'e' pawn two squares forward at Resort Rio in Goa.

This was the first time Wei and Sindarov were coming face-to-face in the classical format. The Chinese opted for Petrov's Defence and managed to create a promising position, but he didn't really press, opting to capture the knight instead of a pawn, which would have given him more to play for.

The stakes are high in the other match, too. Andrey Esipenko, after making that terrible blunder against Wei that cost him a place in the Candidates, should be feeling better. The Russian beat Nodirbek Yakubboev to take a 1-0 lead in the third-place playoff.This time, playing from the white side of a Sicilian Defence (Four Knights), Esipneko was the beneficiary of some weak moves under time pressure from his opponent. —*PTI*

Delhi, Karnataka express interest in hosting Davis Cup

NEW DELHI, 24 NOV

India will host the formidable Netherlands in the Davis Cup Qualifiers in February next year, and most likely the tie will be played on the hard courts, with both Delhi and Karnataka expressing the desire to stage the matches.

India advanced to the Qualifiers stage after upstaging Switzerland 3-1 in a rare overseas success in World Group I in September, while the Dutch team lost by the same margin to Argentina in the second round of the Qualifiers.

The Qualifiers 1st Round will take place on February 6-7 or 7-8, with home nations having the choice of dates.

The draw was made on Sunday evening.The last time the two teams competed in Davis Cup was in 2003, when the Netherlands thumped India 5-0 at home.

The overall head-to-head record stands 2-2.The Netherlands have three singles players in the top-100, led by world number 25Tallon Griekspoor.

Jesper de Jong (76) and Botic van de Zandschulp (77) are the other two players. Guy Den Ouden (160) is another solid player in the Dutch ranks.The Dutch team also has three top-50 players in doubles: David Pel (29), Sander Arends (30) and Sem Verbeek (36).India's Davis Cup captain Rohit Rajpal is confident of the country's good show."If India gets its best players competing in the tie and they perform the way they did against Switzerland, we can beat any team. —*PTI*

Italy wins Davis Cup for third straight year by beating Spain in final

BOLOGNA, 24 NOV

Italian tennis player Matteo Berrettini and captain Filippo Volandri celebrate with teammates after winning the 2025 Davis Cup final match between Italy and Spain at Bologna Fiere *PHOTO: PTI*

Italy remains the king of the Davis Cup – and didn't even need Jannik Sinner this time.

Matteo Berrettini and Flavio Cobolli were the stars for the Italians without the absent Sinner, both winning their singles matches to earn an unassailable 2-0 lead over Spain in the final on Sunday night. It's a fourth Davis Cup title for Italy, and a third in a row. The last nation to win three straight titles was the United States, which won five on the bounce from 1968-72.

The second-ranked Sinner, who led Italy to the men's tennis' biggest team trophy the past two years, opted out of playing this week, preferring to prepare for next season instead. No. 8-ranked Lorenzo Musetti wasn't playing, either. Italy didn't need them, winning all three of its matches 2-0 this week in the SuperTennis Arena in Bologna after eliminating Austria in the quarterfinals and Belgium in the semifinals. Spain was also without its star player, top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz.

In Sunday's final, Berrettini beat Pablo Carreno Busta 6-3, 6-4 before Cobolli fought back to beat Jaume Munar 1-6, 7-6 (5), 7-5 and clinch the winning point — as he has all three times this week. Cobolli dropped his racket to the ground and was lifted in the air by his Italy teammates.

Italy first won the Davis Cup in 1976, before wins in Malaga in 2023 and '24. This is the first time it has won on home soil.Six-time champion Spain was playing in the title match for the first time since 2019. —*PTI*

Medvedev, Bopanna in same team for WTL's India debut

BENGALURU, 24 NOV

Russian star Daniil Medvedev and Indian veteran Rohan Bopanna will play in the same squad, while Sumit Nagal is part of a side that features former world number 6 Gael Monfils for the World Tennis League to be held here from 17 to 20 December. Nick Kyrgios and Canadian star Denis Shapovalov are the other big draws that will headline the franchise-based event comprising four teams. The 2025 edition will feature 16 international and Indian players across four teams at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium, marking the league's first staging outside the UAE after three seasons. Fresh from his Almaty Open title last month, world number 13 Medvedev will turn out for defending champions Game Changers Falcons, teaming up with doubles great Rohan Bopanna, among others. "The squad is led by Medvedev's court dominance and Bopanna's doubles expertise. With Magda and Sahaja adding depth and versatility, we are looking at a power-packed season ahead," Game Changers Falcons' Amandeep stated.Shapovalov leads the debuts VB Realty Hawks, who also feature India's Bhambri. Kyrgios, the 2022 Wimbledon finalist, will represent Aussie Kites. "With Kyrgios' explosive serve and big-match temperament, Kostyuk's aggression, and strong Indian representation through Dhakshineshwar and Ankita Raina.—*PTI*

Daniil Medvedev *PHOTO: PTI*

Rohan Bopanna *PHOTO: PTI*

SYED MODI INTERNATIONAL

Srikanth, Prannoy look to end season on a high

LUCKNOW, 24 NOV

Senior shuttlers Kidambi Srikanth and HS Prannoy will look to end the season on a high, but they will face a stiff challenge from a crop of ambitious youngsters, gearing up to test themselves against top players at the Syed Modi International Super 300, beginning here on Tuesday.

The USD 240,000 event also lost a bit of sheen with US Open champion Ayush Shetty withdrawing from the event at the last moment after competing in the recent Australian Open.

Former champion Srikanth appeared to have found a second wind with a runner-up finish at the Malaysia Masters, but he could not build on that momentum. Now, a home event gives him another chance to end the year on a positive note.

Prannoy, recovering from a side strain that forced him out of the European leg in October, also returns hungry for success.

The 2023 world championships bronze winner competed at the Japan Masters and the Australian Open over the last two weeks but bowed out in the second round on both occasions.

Fifth seed Srikanth will open against Meiraba Luwang Maisnam, while third seed Prannoy faces Kavin Thangam in his first round.

All eyes will also be on sixth seed Tharun Mannepalli, who takes on Sathish Kumar Karunakaran, while S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian will also back himself when he opens against Manraj Singh.

Mithun Manjunath meets Kazakhstan's Dmitriy Panarin, while Priyanshu Rajawat returns to action after a long injury lay-off caused by a knee issue.—*PTI*

VICTORIOUS INDIAN TEAM

Indian Blind Women's T20 World champions arrive in Bengaluru after winning the T20 Blind World Cup. They were felicitated by Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled and Cricket Association for the Blind in India, on Monday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*